NEA Today
The Magazine of the National Education Associa
MAY 2000

NEA Members Insurance Trust Summary Annual Report Enclosed.
see page 30

Beyond Taco Tuesdays

NEA members like Raquel Ramsey do diversity right.

See page 8

NEA Today

Volume 18 • Number 8

Scott Suchman

COVER STORY

Beyond Taco Tuesdays

page 8

Students and staff at Barrett Elementary in Arlington, Virginia, know all about appreciating and celebrating diversity. Their 500-student school includes kids from dozens of countries. All across the nation, schools like Barrett are paying far more than lip service to diverse student needs.

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Cover photo by Bob Riha, Jr.

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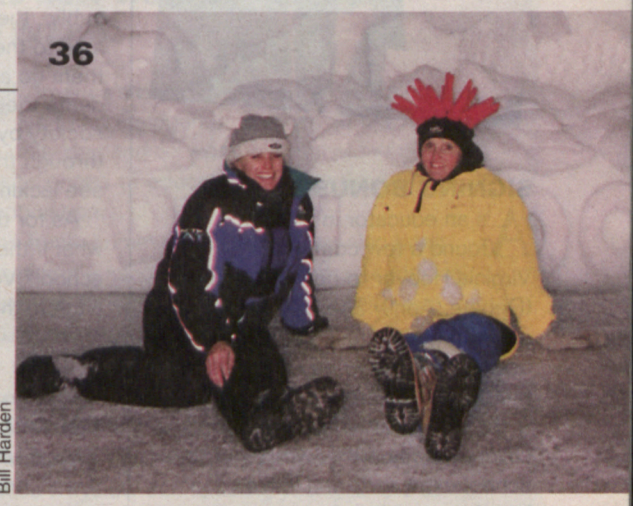

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Letters

SIGNING BONUSES

As an educator in Arizona, I found a few comments by Virginia Hoover to be disheartening (Debate, April). She said that teachers who get a signing bonus can use that money to buy supplies for their class.

Before I got married and had children of my own, I would get to school extra early and leave very late. I spent a lot of money on supplies. Today, I spend $.00 on my classroom. I came to realize that the state legislators do not care that I work extra hard. They do not care about properly funding my class, or my salary.

Instead of trying to pay for things myself, I tell children that although field trips and colored pencils and crayons would be nice tools to use, the state does not supply me with enough. I then tell my students to tell their parents to talk to their legislators. I use my classes' lack of funding as a teaching moment.

People, think about it. As long as you spend your hard-earned money in your classrooms, the state will not put in the needed dollars.

If we all spend $.00 on our students, and tell them why there is no money, we will get infuriated parents demanding that the state properly fund education.

Mace Bravin
Tucson, Arizona

BOOKLESS LIBRARY

I was a bit surprised by the photo on page 13 of the April *NEA Today*. At first glance, this library looks like a terrific facility, but they forgot to spend money on books!

It is nice that the children can see the front covers, but what a waste of bookshelves! Many of the lower shelves are empty, but the out-of-reach top shelves have books.

I have thousands of books in my second grade classroom. If you want children to read, you have to provide the material!

Sue Marsh
Belvidere, New Jersey

VOUCHERS ARE GOOD

Regarding Steve Hosch's letter about vouchers (April), I think vouchers are right for two very important reasons.

First, the money goes to mom and dad. They can, and should, decide where the tuition goes. It would probably go to an institution that competes with the public schools for educational excellence. Who is the NEA to tell mom and dad where to send their children?

Second, while private schools don't have to be accountable to the public, they do have to be accountable to the parents. I know many of them do a good job teaching students their place in a democratic society by instilling love of country through their curricula, something I see lacking in our public schools.

As for the church-state issue, so what if the money goes to a religious school? Vouchers don't support a church, they support an education.

Tim McGee
Mansfield, Massachusetts

ON CALL 24/7

I hope Millie Brooks is still alive and well, and not the victim of her own naivete (Letters, April).

To say that a teacher should be "on call" 24/7 only proves the truth of another statement she made, that she is "a future educator." Obviously, she's never had to wonder whether irate parents were going to interrupt supper/bath/quiet time/private time because they felt their little darlings deserved an A+ and were "given" (never "earned") a D–.

You will learn to appreciate time away from the subject of school. You will learn to guard your privacy.

Should we really be "on-call"? Are there that many things that really need to be dealt with over the phone between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.? Only if it is a *real* crisis—and, then, I wonder if the authorities might not be the better place to turn first.

I hope you're trained in crisis handling. If not, you are opening yourself up to liability/malpractice possibilities.

I find it ironic that this letter appeared in an issue that dealt mostly with the inadequacies of teacher pay.

Dale Robbins
Piqua, Ohio

PEN PUNISHMENT

You recently asked your readers to respond to the question, "How do you handle disruptive students?" (April). I was shocked that you published a response that had writing as the consequence for disruptive behavior.

The writing of a sentence 50 or more times is not teaching the student proper classroom behavior. The disruptive student will have less time to do regular schoolwork, or will learn that putting words on paper is what happens when you are "bad."

When students learn that writing is a punishment for bad behavior, they also learn to avoid the punishment. A student's writing should be a positive experience. I hate to think of the children who will lose their passion for the written word if even a single teacher adopts this method of squelching our developing writers.

Michael Williams
Portland, Oregon

ROOKIE ASSIGNMENTS

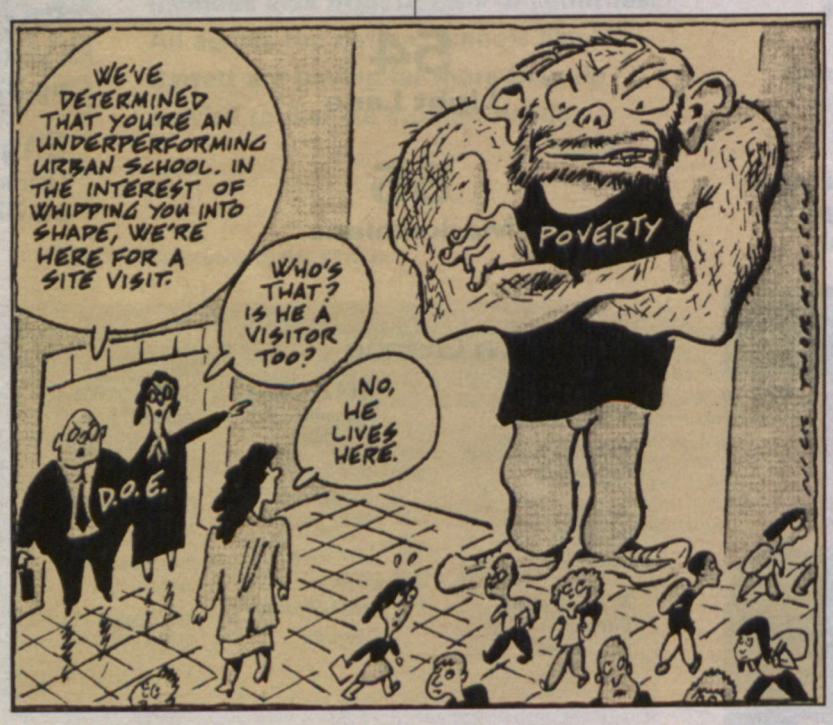
I was alarmed to read the position taken by Suzanne Emery on giving new teachers the toughest assignments (Debate, March). She referred to experienced teachers using their "years of valuable resources in other locations."

Let's read between the lines. According to Emery, the people who know best how to deal with difficult situations (and who, I might remind all of us, are entitled to and receive greater compensation) should have the "cush" jobs where those skills are not needed as much.

I'm sure that anyone who survives her "boot camp" introduction to teaching will make a fine teacher. But how many fine young teachers will her plan run off? Unfortunately, in most buildings, her attitude of letting veteran teachers go into early retirement while throwing new teachers to the sharks is prevalent.

Three cheers to Wendy Patterson. We veteran teachers need to follow her lead.

Harry McDonald
Olathe, Kansas


WE'VE DETERMINED THAT YOU'RE AN UNDERPERFORMING URBAN SCHOOL. IN THE INTEREST OF WHIPPING YOU INTO SHAPE, WE'RE HERE FOR A SITE VISIT.
WHO'S THAT? IS HE A VISITOR TOO?
NO, HE LIVES HERE.
D.O.E.
POVERTY

VOUCHERS AND RELIGION

With regard to Caroline Zimmermann's letter (March) favoring vouchers, one wonders if she knows anything about history, today's needs, or the Constitution.

Almost all voucher money would go to schools set up to teach religion. I know of nothing more dangerous than forcing one's beliefs on others, a step that leads to alienation, fear, hate, and, eventually, to violence. This was the reason behind our early government's decision to separate church and state.

To force people to pay for education in a religion they do not share is tyranny. Public schools are open to all and serve all. When they need help, the government must help them.

Frances Baris
Danbury, Connecticut

ASPERSIONS

Did you think Frank Verducci's article, "Trading the Boardroom for the Classroom" (March), was going to lure qualified individuals to the teaching profession?

It is shameful that he cannot focus on those who bring teaching to lofty levels and inspire not just students, but also colleagues.

Verducci believes the lessons he learned in business are also valid in teaching. Did those lessons include berating your peers and casting aspersions on your current profession? Will this lead you to become a respected member of the teaching community?

"The responsibility we have as teachers is simply awesome," he writes. This is true. But Verducci needs to emulate the many positive role models in his district, not act in a manner that he says he abhors.

In submitting this self-promoting article, he shows he is no better than the teachers for whom he has contempt.

Frances Holck
Holmdel, New Jersey

GORE, FOR AND AGAINST

Robert Oldfield (Letters, March) criticized Al Gore as a "tax and spend" liberal. The facts show our country was misled deeply into debt, not by liberals, but by conservatives such as Ronald Reagan and George Bush. It was Bill Clinton and Al Gore who brought us not only a balanced budget but large surpluses.

Every year, our former Democratic

Congress proposed less spending than conservative Presidents like Reagan, whose bloated budgets more than doubled the spending on weapons and corporate welfare.

The last Democratic Congress in 1993 passed tax and deficit reduction measures that have led to improved balances every year Clinton and Gore have been in office.

Conservatives constantly complain about programs that provide food and shelter to children in poverty. Yet our current Republican Congress has increased pork barrel spending to the point that corporate welfare is now five times more expensive than the old welfare for the poor. Frankly, I'm tired of these "tax and spend" conservative Republicans blowing my hard-earned tax dollars like drunken cowboys in Las Vegas on a Saturday night.

Bert Miller
Mt. Pleasant, Iowa

Let's Talk

Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of five ways:

- By mail: Write to Letters, NEA Today, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036
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- By E-mail: Write to neatoday@nea.org
- By Fax: 202/822-7206
- By Phone: 202/822-7201

Letters are edited for length and clarity.

I am truly disgusted and angry with the NEA. As a lifetime member, I have always felt that you should stay out of politics. This year, you overstepped the bounds when you rushed to support Al Gore so early.

I am more and more convinced that you care more about political clout than about our precious children. If you did your homework, you would discover that countless millions of parents and taxpayers do not feel that "tax and spend" has solved the problems in our schools.

More of the same with Gore!

Doris Shea
Naples, Florida

BOOSTING MORALE

How do you raise morale among teachers and support staff? My morale was lowered significantly by the solutions you reported (March).

A piece of fruit! A smile! Birthday parties! Butcher paper in the lunchroom! Yes, these are nice. But *no one* mentioned modern buildings with adequate facilities, appropriate class size and sound educational programs, professional or suitable salaries, or time and resources for professional growth.

Joel Berg
Lake Grove, New York

NAME BRANDS

I was sorry to see your "thumbs down" for the notion of displaying real-life name brands in school textbooks (March). In case you have not heard, this *is* a capitalist country (not a dirty word).

As a teacher of economics for 12 years, I know that one cannot talk about the American marketplace without including the fact of competition (not a dirty word, either).

There is nothing wrong with presenting the American economy as it really looks. We do not live in a Soviet-style economy where everyone is poor and every product is generic. We can be thankful for that. By the way, I am a Democrat.

Aaron De Groot
San Diego, California

MYSTERY MEAT

As a Registered Dietitian and NEA member, I was very disappointed by the reference to "mystery meat" in the February issue.

The staff preparing the school lunch programs for today's students have a tough job meeting the strict nutritional guidelines and students' changing tastes. Comments that disparage another school employee's work are never appropriate in an advocacy newsletter.

Go to your local school sometime soon and enjoy a lunch. You will be pleasantly surprised! Now please, practice what you preach and support all school staff!

Jan Bodnar
Poynette, Wisconsin

(BUSINESS) SCHOOL?

In "Making the Right Math Connections" (February), teacher James Koutsos is quoted as saying he is "building" his seventh graders into "problem solvers because that's what the business community is looking for." His assumptions are disturbing and wrong.

First, the assumption that human beings—let alone children—can and should be "built," as if they were pieces of lumber, objectifies them. It also subverts the essential purpose of education, enabling a child to develop his potentialities for his own benefit.

The second assumption, that the business community's request for certain job skills ought to take precedence in school over the needs, interests, wants, and goals of students is patently false, even if widespread.

Public schools and teachers exist to serve our young people. Their welfare is our primary concern, not the economy, the chambers of commerce, or corporate America. The business community is out-of-bounds when it tries to make the schools a *de facto* branch of its human resources department.

Bonnie Fisher, Ph.D.
Bloomington, Indiana

President's Viewpoint

BY BOB CHASE

Are You Ready?

'Celebrating diversity' must be more than happy talk. It is how we prepare young people for the future.

For many of America's best public schools, "Celebrate Diversity" isn't just a slogan, it is a way of life. This is also extremely demanding work. We shouldn't gloss over the challenges of educating a richly diverse student population.

Let's be frank, sometimes diversity can also bring adversity—for example, when a handicapped child suffers a medical emergency in our classroom. Or when a teacher must break up a racially charged dispute in the hallway. Or when several kids in our classroom can't speak English.

And yet—no question about it—we also take enormous pride in the diversity of our public schools. Why? Because our schools refuse to exclude; we insist on including every child, from the most gifted to the most challenging. Because we know that teaching young people to cooperate and excel in a diverse setting is a hugely important lesson in and of itself. And because our public schools are one of the few remaining institutions that bring together Americans of all colors, classes, cultures, and faiths.

"We know that teaching young people to cooperate and excel in a diverse setting is a hugely important lesson in and of itself."

My point, simply, is that diversity is not easy. But when it works—when students and educators seize on diversity as a strength—we then have a superior, "real world" learning environment.

A good example is T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia, just across the Potomac from where I live and work. "T.C."—as everyone calls it—is one of the most respected, comprehensive high schools in the country. And a big reason for the school's success is its rich urban diversity.

At T.C., there is no such thing as a "majority" racial or ethnic group. Black kids, white kids, brown kids, yellow kids—they are all "minorities." Included in the mix are hundreds of immigrant students from more than 50 nations.

Nearly 90 percent of T.C.'s students go on to college or university. The Science Bowl team—a rainbow of native-born and immigrant kids—is the school's special pride. For two years running, T.C. has placed first in the state in the prestigious national Science Bowl competition. When T.C.'s triumphs are announced over the p.a., classrooms throughout the school erupt in cheers. (Hats off to Dr. Manu Patel, team coach and physics teacher—and NEA member since 1976.)

In short, T.C. Williams works. Its terrific teachers and support staff strive every day to build a climate of inclusiveness and respect. As one student told me: "We all get along—all of us. If anyone tried to act racist or to hurt someone, the other kids just wouldn't allow it."

As educators and parents, we ask ourselves: How is the best way to prepare our children for the future? Bear in mind that the United States is rapidly becoming the world's first truly multiethnic, multicultural country. The Census Bureau projects that, by the year 2030, the African-American population will grow by 68 percent, the Asian-American population by 79 percent, and the Hispanic-American population by an amazing 187 percent. America's majority white population soon will be just one more minority.

A new world is emerging—and it is all about diversity.

As Cisco Systems asks in its ubiquitous TV ads: "Are you ready?" Students at T.C. Williams—and at public schools across America—have a proud, hard-earned answer: "Yes we are!"

Comments? You can E-mail Bob Chase at BobChase@nea.org. If you would like a response, please be sure to include your name and NEA local affiliate.

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MMNT0500

Economic Boom for Whom?

Frustrated by the gap between prosperity hype and everyday reality, this high school teacher and her students dare to ask tough questions.

BY TAMARA SOBER GIECEK

We live in prosperous times. At least that's the message we seem to hear almost every day on the news. But I can't seem to square the reports of record prosperity with my day-to-day experiences in the classroom.

In my government and economics classes, any time I mention a contemporary reality that doesn't fit the prosperity picture—corporate downsizing, for instance—a few students will almost immediately begin to open up and share stories about relatives who've been devastated by a job loss.

Then later, after class, other students will confide in me, one-on-one, about the economic devastation they're experiencing, in their own families. I remember the girl who couldn't stay awake because she had to work the late shift to help pay her family's bills, the boy who couldn't stay focused because he was hungry.

I encounter the same hard realities when I contact parents to talk about their children's progress—or lack of it. The parents so often unload. They're living in temporary housing, they're between jobs, they're not able to provide for their family's basic needs.

If I see these sorts of situations in the affluent suburb where I teach, I shutter to think of the realities inner city teachers must face, realities so powerfully described in books like Jonathan Kozol's *Savage Inequalities*.

What I see in my school, I believe, reflects on a small scale what's happening in society at large. Some of my students drive to school in new BMWs. Others come to school hungry. I am a daily witness to America's growing inequality of income and wealth.

This inequality matters. It matters because the standards movement, as it labels one school a success and another a failure, fails to address inequality. It matters because there's no way I can teach that the system works for everyone, that the rising tide will lift all boats, when my students know differently.

I accept the idea that, in a free market system, people may make choices that lead to varying levels of economic success or despair. But I also know, as a history teacher, that there were times in our past when Americans worried deeply about the dangers of concentrated wealth, when Americans fought for—and won—economic policies that helped people at all income levels.

Today, wealth in the United States is more concentrated than at any time since the 1920s, right before the Great Depression. The wealthiest 1 percent of Americans now own a greater share of the nation's wealth than the bottom 95 percent. Meanwhile, adjusted for inflation, wages for average working people still haven't come back to what they were in the early 1970s.

My students at the bottom of the economic ladder are bombarded, every day, with messages that leave them believing they've missed the prosperity train. They begin to doubt their own personal abilities.

At the other end are the students who've completely bought in to the idea that they, too, will one day become multimillionaires. These students pour over the stock charts, relishing every opportunity to learn how the stock market works.

This hunger for "learning" makes me uncomfortable. Learning about stocks is indeed important, but students also need to learn to think about economic issues—like inequality—that go beyond Dow Jones average ups and downs.

Issues about money and class are, of course, sensitive issues, and, at first, I was apprehensive about raising these issues with my students. I did anyway. I felt silence would reinforce the myth that we are a classless society where you need only work hard to move up.

The student response? Extremely positive. Once we began to discuss inequality, students on both ends of the economic scale began to make important discoveries.

I've subsequently worked to develop a curriculum guide for teachers like me, educators looking for materials to help students understand and think about the many issues that inequality raises.

The curriculum's 20 lessons all require students' active participation. In a sense, I suppose, I'm trying to teach economics as if people mattered. They do. ✔

Joe Mahoney

Silence may be golden, says this social studies teacher from Virginia, but not when it comes to issues of inequality, money, and class.

Tamara Sober Giecek (tgiecek@aol.com) teaches social studies at James River High in Chesterfield, Virginia. For info about her new curriculum, Teaching Economics As If People Mattered, *contact United for a Fair Economy, at 37 Temple Place, second floor, Boston, MA 02111. Fax: 617/423-0191. E-mail: info@ufenet.org. For more on inequality today: www.ufenet.org.*

I often get asked what the *NEA Today* staff does once the final issue of the school year goes to press. The short answer: We start all over again on next year's issues, but let me be more specific.

In late April, we begin with more than two weeks of planning. During this time, we take stock of what we've been doing through roundtable discussions with our Local Editor Advisory Board of seven team members from around the nation who provide us regular feedback throughout the year.

Bill Fischer
editor

In the spring, we bring the local editors together to pick their brains about future topics.

Then we go over the results of our annual reader surveys, taken every year since *NEA Today* was launched in 1982. Survey results give us a good benchmark of our strengths and weaknesses: how much members read the magazine, favorite sections, and other key data.

From there we move to discuss topics for our main stories, starting with the most-read 1,500 words in labor journalism, our cover stories.

We generally plan about a dozen cover stories, then winnow the list to a final elite eight.

Since we tie each issue's debate to the cover story, the next step is coming up with good debate questions. Then it's on to deciding on eight student health topics, the eight key interview subjects for the year, and on and on.

By the time we end our two weeks of planning, we'll have mapped out at least half of all the material that'll go in *NEA Today* for the next eight issues.

Then it's time to start our September and October issues. Most of the work on both fall issues is complete by late June.

Want to become part of this process? You can help us plan *NEA Today* content for next year by sending us your story tips and ideas. Just E-mail your thoughts to us at neatoday@nea.org.

Bill Fischer

Scott Suchman

There's a picture of Martin Luther King, Jr. in your hallway, a pâpier maché Chinese dragon in the library, and your first-grade assembly includes a Mexican Hat Dance. But if you think you have diversity all covered, you don't!

Beyond Taco

In a nation where, by the year 2020, some 40 percent of children sitting behind school desks will be students of color, serving tacos on Tuesdays just isn't enough any more—if it ever was—to adequately recognize the diversity of our school communities.

Schools today need to go beyond the "sizzle" and get down to the "steak" of creating successful learning environments that work for all students.

And NEA members are up to that challenge, as the stories below—from an elementary school in Virginia, a middle school in Wisconsin, and a high school in California—make abundantly clear.

It's Elementary: Reach Out!

Maria Mendoza mashes the *endredo de yuka*, Edwin measures the *masa*, and Amy Sack, with the help of a translator, takes careful notes. Who's the teacher, who's the pupil?

Edwin, a third-grader at K. W. Barrett Elementary in Arlington, Virginia, may sit in teacher Amy Sack's class five hours a day, but it's Amy who's learning valuable lessons about Central American culture—in Edwin's home kitchen.

"The kitchen," says Rosa Briceño, Barrett Elementary's full-time family program coordinator, "is a safe place for interacting and learning together."

In Barrett Elementary's "Kitchen Math" program, teachers visit the homes of second-language learners to cook and eat while demonstrating hands-on math. Faculty cooked up the program to help involve new immigrant families in their children's learning.

"We're all on the same page when it comes to creating strategies to help second-language students," says library media specialist Roslyn Beitler, who came to Barrett Elementary at about the same time the county stepped up efforts to meet the challenges posed by rapidly changing ethnic demographics.

"Define discrimination. How do you treat people who are not like you?"

—Wisconsin middle school teacher Michael Koren

Barrett Elementary—with a student population that's nearly 70 percent Hispanic and 12 percent Asian—responded to that challenge by:

- Working to build a bilingual staff. Two-thirds of staff members now speak more than one language. All the school's teachers are enrolled in George Mason University's Institute on Second Language Acquisition.
- Reaching out aggressively to the community. At Barrett, twice a week computer nights facilitate student access while parents take literacy classes or attend Comite Latino/PTA meetings.

Barrrett Elementary believes in diversity by design. Children give bilingual "Friday Folders" to their parents, who return comments in their native language. Parents attend Friday Family Breakfast meetings for conversations over coffee and construction paper.

And the school's "Project Interaction" ties it all together, with high-tech, student-animated, bilingual broadcasts that air on hallway monitors during parent pick-up and drop-off times.

"We're interested in pushing our kids to become independent learners and seekers of information," says Beitler, who shares her collection of multicultural books during monthly Library Nights.

Bob Riha, Jr.

In schools like Virginia's Barrett Elementary and California's Beverly Hills High, NEA members Yolanda Smingler (left) and Sarah Sedghi (above) work hard to go beyond the diversity basics.

Tuesdays

"We really want to make a difference with these kids," she adds. "We have a creative staff and a shared vision of where we want them to be when they leave us."

Middle School Tolerance

Even the name Maple Dale has a "Mayberry"-like quality to it. But this majority white middle school of 333 students, nestled in the affluent suburbs of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, sees itself ahead of the curve when it comes to helping students appreciate diversity.

Maple Dale—75 percent white today—first convened a multicultural committee nearly 25 years ago, when the school's minority population barely topped 3 percent.

"This school is always in the forefront," says social studies teacher Michael Koren, a 20-year veteran.

Koren's class plays "Diversity Toss," a card game about identity, reads articles about Nazi Germany and Japanese internment camps, and examines accounts about contemporary racism. Koren has also developed lessons that help students experience what discrimination actually feels like.

"Define discrimination," he begins a typical lesson. "How do you treat people who are not like you?"

Koren has replicated his diversity lessons as a presenter at state and national social studies conferences.

"I try to get people to see things from a different perspective," he explains.

Koren feels Maple Dale is doing a good job responding to a growing minority population, but he's still concerned about the lack of staff diversity—for many years, he was the only Jewish teacher many local kids would ever get to see.

Maple Dale will take another step forward this year as it welcomes its first African American principal.

"We've come a long way," says Koren. "But there's still a lot of room to grow."

A Multilingual High School

Near Hollywood backlots and sets for TV's *Beverly Hills 90210*, Beverly Hills High creates "real world" approaches to engage students who hail from 57 countries and speak 46 languages.

More than half the students speak English as a second language, notes Raquel Ramsey, the school's full-time English language coordinator.

Ramsey's school nurtures its student diversity. Multiculturalism permeates the curriculum and school culture.

One example: *Voices Around the World*, an annual literary magazine edited by an international staff of students, publishes in as many languages as students submit.

During Global Village Week, originated by Dr. Neo Gutierrez, students interact with Peace Corps volunteers and consulate officials, enjoy performances from the school's many culture clubs, and participate in an annual International Dinner.

Is it working? In one recent survey, 84 percent of those students from 57 countries speaking 46 languages gave two thumbs up! ✔

—Michelle Y. Green

For more, information contact:

- **Roslyn Beitler at 703/228-6288; bilingual Web site at http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/schools/barrett/.**
- **Mike Koren, 414/351-7380 x 1030, Mkoren@execpc.com, www.mapledale.k12.wi.us.**
- **Raquel Ramsey, 310/551-5100 x 8238, http://bhhs.beverlyhills.**

Walk the Talk

Okay. Okay. So how exactly do I make the move from tacos, teepees, and Harriett Tubman to walking the talk about multicultural education?

"Multicultural education has three major goals: to know, to care, and to act," says Dr. James Banks, professor of education and director of the Center for Multicultural Education at the University of Washington, Seattle.

In *An Introduction to Multicultural Education* (New York: Boston, Allyn, and Bacon, 2nd ed., 1999), Banks notes attempts to diversify education typically take place at one of four levels.

Check the list of levels below. Which one reflects practice at your school? How could your school move up to the next level?

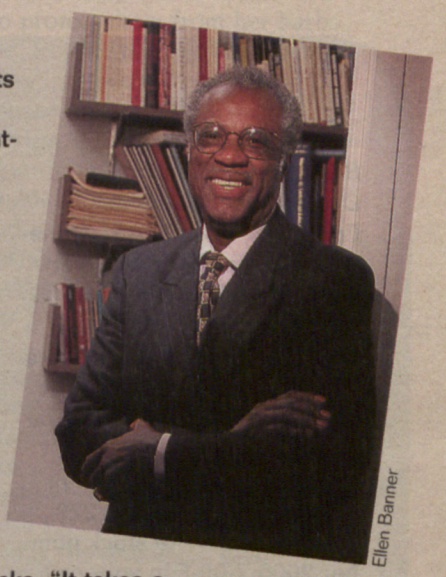
Level 1—Contributions. **A school focuses on heroes, holidays, food, and other discrete cultural elements. During special commemorative days (Cinco de Mayo, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday, Chinese New Year) students are involved in lessons and experiences related to the ethnic group being studied.**

Level 2—Additive. **A school adds a unit or course on a particular ethnic group without any change to the basic curriculum, adding, for example, a unit on Native Americans or Haitians to the traditional social studies course.**

Level 3—Transformation. **A school infuses various perspectives, frames of reference, and content material from various groups to extend student understanding of the nature, development, and complexity of American society.**

The basic curriculum changes. The conquest of American territory, for instance, is viewed from multiple perspectives, including those of Native Americans, African Americans, wealthy European settlers, and indentured servants from Europe.

Level 4—Decision Making and Social Action. **A school includes all of the elements from level 3 but also encourages students to make decisions and take action related to the concepts, issues, or problems they have studied.**



Ellen Banner

The goal: to help students develop a vision of a better society and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to bring about constructive social change.

"You can't get to level four tomorrow," says Banks. "It takes a gradual approach."

Taking action could mean making a friend from another group, going to see a movie like *Hurricane*, reading a book like *Snow Falling on Cedars*, or learning a second language.

"I challenge the notion that multicultural education divides us," says Banks. "It's about uniting a deeply divided nation, not about dividing a united nation." ✔

For more, Banks is the editor of an eight-book Multicultural Education Series published by Teacher College Press. Call 800/575-6566. Or visit the Center for Multicultural Education at http://depts.washington.edu/centerme/home.htm.

Roger Sherer

Q&A
Affirming Diversity

Sonia Nieto is professor of language, literacy, and culture at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The author of *Affirming Diversity* and *The Light in Their Eyes: Creating Multicultural Learning Communities*, she spoke recently with *NEA Today*.

What is "multicultural education" to you?
It involves looking at issues of access and social justice—how some students benefit from their education and others don't.

For example, if a student speaks a language other than English, it would be folly to think that student will benefit from the same educational experience as a student who's fluent in English.

It's not that the hordes are coming and the barbarians are at the gate. We've always been here, we've always been a diverse society. We just haven't taken diversity very seriously.

Why does multiculturalism arouse such volatile debate?
Multiculturalism challenges the conventional "melting pot" wisdom that the purpose of school is to melt students into this society, that the best thing we can do for students is to help them become more alike.

Children from cultures different from the majority feel they have to abandon who they are in order to be successful. That's a terrible price to pay.

How do cultural factors affect a student's ability to succeed in school?
There often has been an assumption that all young people from the same background will approach learning in the same way. We end up with what I call a "list" approach to multicultural education. We provide teachers with lists of behaviors and attitudes of children from particular backgrounds. Those lists are often harmful because they solidify stereotypes.

We need to challenge our own biases. Teachers need to become students of their students, embrace what their students bring to the classroom, and be respectful of where they are coming from.

Does multicultural education benefit nonminorities?
Who would not benefit from reading the poetry of Langston Hughes or learning another language? Multicultural education is not a compensatory program or a patronizing approach to help inner city kids. It's about helping all kids become better learners and better prepared to live in the 21st century. ✔

For more, visit www.awlonline.com/nieto.

RESOURCES

■ *The Multicultural Resource Series: Development Guide for Educators*, Paul Gorski, Gene-Tey Shin, and Martha Green. The first book in the NEA Professional Library *Multicultural Resource Series*. Available free on the Web at www.nea.org/books. Or order a hard copy, $18.95 plus $2.50 s&h, from the Web or by calling toll-free 800/229-4200. Please note stock number 2005-7-00-F in your call.

■ Coming this summer, *Resources for the Multicultural Classroom*, the second book in the *Multicultural Resource Series*.

■ *All Together Now*
A guide to educational activities and resources on diversity for teachers of young children published by the Leadership Conference Education Fund, http://civilrights.org/diversity_works/education/index.html.

■ *Rethinking Schools: An Urban Educational Journal* at www.rethinkingschools.org. Order the *Rethinking Schools Catalog* of resources for equity and social justice on the Web, or by phone at 800-669-4192.

■ Clearinghouse for Multicultural/Bilingual Education, for educators from pre-kindergarten to higher education. http://catsis.weber.edu/MBE.

■ *Multicultural Perspectives*, published quarterly by the National Association for Multicultural Education. www.umd.edu/name.

■ Our Diverse Society: Living, Working, and Learning Together, training workshops for NEA local and state affiliates. Contact Ron Houston, NEA Human and Civil Rights, 202/822-7710.

■ NEA Joint Conference on Concerns of Minorities and Women, June 28-29, 2000, before the NEA Representative Assembly, at the Chicago Hilton & Towers, Chicago. The Annual Human and Civil Rights Awards dinner will be held July 2. Call 202/822-7702 or write NEA Human and Civil Rights, 1201 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-3290. The $80 per person early bird registration fee must be received by May 15, $100 regular registration fee by June 1.

■ Teaching Tolerance
A national education project and quarterly journal from the Southern Poverty Law Center. www.teachingtolerance.org.

■ *Teaching for Change* catalog, hundreds of K-12 books, videos, and posters for teaching from a social justice perspective. Published by the Network of Educators on the Americas. www.teachingforchange.org/catalog.html.

Times Change

State	Fall 1986 % Minority Enrollment	Fall 1995 % Minority Enrollment
United States	**29.6**	**35.2**
Alabama	38.0	37.9
Alaska	34.3	36.3
Arizona	**37.8**	**43.1**
Arkansas	25.3	26.1
California	**46.3**	**59.6**
Colorado	**21.3**	**27.5**
Connecticut	**22.8**	**28.0**
Delaware	31.7	35.3
District of Columbia	96.0	96.0
Florida	**34.6**	**42.5**
Georgia	39.3	41.8
Hawaii	76.5	77.1
Idaho	7.4	11.6
Illinois	**30.2**	**36.4**
Indiana	11.3	14.4
Iowa	5.4	7.3
Kansas	14.4	17.4
Kentucky	10.8	10.9
Louisiana	**43.5**	**49.0**
Maine	1.7	2.7
Maryland	40.3	42.5
Massachusetts	**16.3**	**21.5**
Michigan	23.6	23.6
Minnesota	**6.1**	**12.6**
Mississippi	56.1	52.3
Missouri	16.6	18.3
Montana	7.3	12.5
Nebraska	8.6	12.8
Nevada	**22.6**	**33.5**
New Hampshire	2.0	3.3
New Jersey	**30.9**	**37.5**
New Mexico	56.9	60.5
New York	**31.6**	**43.1**
North Carolina	31.6	35.4
North Dakota	7.6	9.2
Ohio	16.9	17.8
Oklahoma	**21.0**	**30.6**
Oregon	10.2	14.7
Pennsylvania	15.6	19.4
Rhode Island	**12.1**	**21.1**
South Carolina	45.4	43.7
South Dakota	**9.4**	**16.3**
Tennessee	23.5	24.7
Texas	49.0	53.6
Utah	6.3	9.6
Vermont	1.6	2.7
Virginia	**27.4**	**33.4**
Washington	**15.5**	**21.7**
West Virginia	4.1	4.8
Wisconsin	13.4	16.8
Wyoming	9.3	10.7

Minority percentages include Black, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native.

Represents more than 5 percent increase.

Is school the best place to teach tolerance?

BETTIE SING LUKE, ***a multicultural trainer for the Eugene, Oregon, schools, works with teachers to help students develop tolerance and appreciation for each other's cultures. She has also worked in Seattle and, since 1973, has conducted diversity training in 30 states. E-mail: luke@4j.lane.edu.***

yes

A resounding *yes*! on teaching tolerance in school! School is the only common institution where *all* students can be touched and prepared to survive in our society's marvelous and sometimes maddeningly diverse mix.

We are less connected, as a society, than we were when travel and technology opportunities were more limited. Witness the recent instances of school violence, situations that cried out for tolerance.

Schools, I believe, can help redefine "family" and "belonging" and reinforce respect. They have to. It's unrealistic to depend on tolerance being taught at home.

Have you checked the percentages on single-parent and two-job families? Busy parents may have good ideals to pass on to their children, but we are no longer a society of "Dick and Jane" families sitting down for dinner and quality conversation each night.

Nor are all families models of tolerance. Some young people will reject the intolerant attitudes they might see at home, but what about children who are afraid to think beyond what they are told at home?

What if children never hear alternatives to intolerance at home—especially mainstream students, who can go through their entire lives and never be asked to reconsider their positions of privilege.

Religious or spiritual communities are a natural conduit for teaching tolerance, but in some localities there may be no religious leadership or opportunity to practice.

Cultural beliefs about education can come into play as well.

In my culture, teachers have a highly elevated status. They are entrusted with children because their knowledge and wisdom are believed superior to those of parents.

Chinese heritage is imbued with the Confucian ethics of hierarchy. Parents do not sit and chit chat with their children—this just is not done in traditional families!

I observed, as a child, that my parents had to submit to bias and unfair treatment. If they didn't, they risked further harm to others who looked like us. Had I not had lessons from school, I might have acquiesced to the same fate.

Given these dynamics, schools are the prime choice for imparting tolerance. Dedicated teaching *can* overcome negative attitudes.

When I worked for the Seattle Public Schools, a rumble between Black and Asian students erupted in a middle school woodworking class. The conflict escalated and spilled out into the community.

I chose a Black male as an intervention partner and, together, we quelled the fears on both sides, letting the students know the school had adult advocates of their cultural group working on their behalf.

Young men of both groups were greeting each other in the halls within three weeks.

Schools can teach *all* children about tolerance and connectedness—through anti-bias programs and through *individual commitment* to tolerance, across the board, woven through all subjects.

Students, in turn, can then impact family and outside influences that may not be as tolerant. ✔

BARBARA JOAN GRUBMAN ***is a speech specialist for the Los Angeles Unified School District at Grant High School in Van Nuys, California. She began teaching in New Jersey when Eisenhower was president and her salary was under $3,000. E-mail: bgrubman@lausd.k12.ca.us.***

no

It is how your father treats the neighbors. It is how your mother welcomes the world into your childhood home. It is the words they use to talk about others—the words that help or heal, that allow you as a child to develop a sense of tolerance.

Long before a child's historic first day of school, the home provides a foundation of values. Those early years are made up of precious opportunities for teaching children acceptance of others.

I believe children cannot learn this lesson in school. They have to see tolerance modeled by those nearest and dearest to them. They have to hear the words and read the body language of those who care for them and nurture them from infancy.

Toddlers are sensitive to our every look. They know that "funny" glance, the hidden disdain, the lowered eyes of parents that say "this person is different." Spend a few minutes with a young child, and you'll know they don't miss much. Babies take in attitudes with mother's milk.

My maternal grandmother, Rose, was a frightened and prejudiced woman. I grew up as a lower middle-class kid in the East Bronx, New York. My father's mother, a loving and tolerant woman, also lived nearby. But my mother's mother lived right across the street from us and it was there that I went home for lunch and after school.

I can look back now with the perspective of time and see her fears, but then all I knew was that there were a lot of people out there she did not like, who did not "measure up" to what we were. From her, I learned that blacks were not to be trusted, German Jews were the chosen ones, and many people had what she termed "shifty eyes."

Even as I sat at her oil cloth-covered kitchen table, as she prepared dinner, I knew that those people could not all be bad. Hating the way she treated her foreign-born husband—my beloved grandfather—and hearing her unkind words directed toward my unconventional father, I silently vowed never to be like her. I felt as if I needed to protect them from her barbs. So, ironically, I learned from a very intolerant woman what it meant to be tolerant.

How do we teach our children that those who are different should not be feared—that the kid next to them holds the same fears, loves, emotions as they do?

You have to open your ears to the words of an Orthodox Jewish grandmother who you see has an open heart and a hand for all who come in her path. You have to start to discern from another grandmother, that the way she looks at others is not the way you wish to, even when you are too young to put a name to it.

If we wait until we send our children off that first day of school, proud in their shiny new clothes, it is too late. The window of opportunity for teaching tolerance, while it may not be shut and locked, is already lowered.

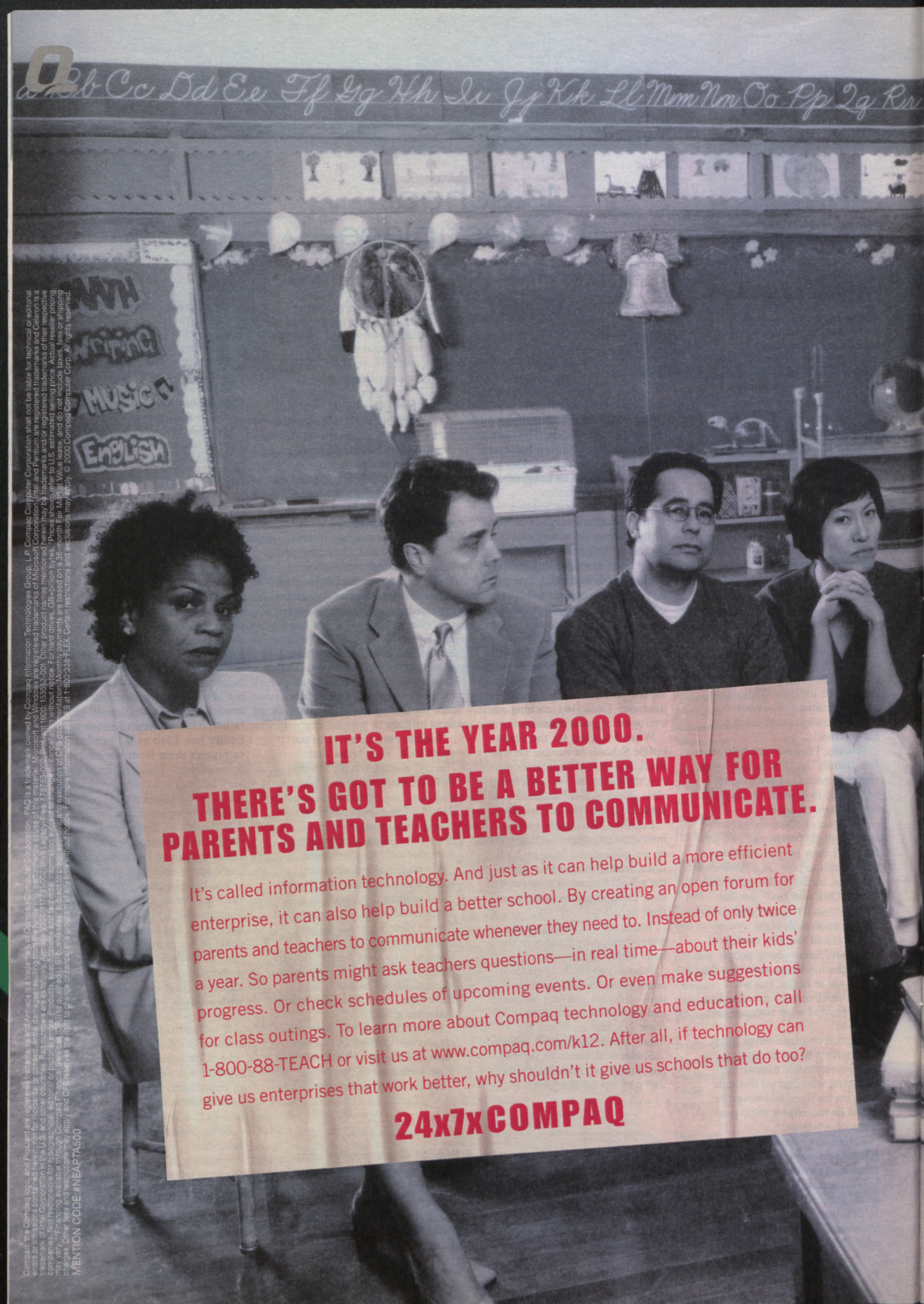
Being exposed to the lesson of tolerance at school is better than not hearing it at all, but without the foundations laid by family, educators face an uphill battle.

A lesson at school can reinforce what a child already feels, but home is where the heart is. ✔

What's Your Opinion?

Is school the best place to teach tolerance?
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

Should districts offer signing bonuses to attract new teachers?
The tally on this Debate question from the last issue of *NEA Today:*
39% Yes **61% No**



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Sandy Schaeffer

California NEA member Jeffrey Chin, right, recently told Congress that teachers need technology training. Schools, NEA researchers add, need $54 billion for technology overall, plus $255 billion for infrastructure.

Testimony Too Profound to Ignore

Through the words of a teacher and in-depth research, NEA exposes lawmakers to the *urgent* need for school modernization.

Brick by brick, NEA's campaign to modernize America's public schools is helping build a new consciousness on Capitol Hill. Lawmakers are learning that unmet infrastructure and technology needs are greater than they *ever* imagined.

A modernization campaign update:

■ In testimony this March before a subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, California NEA member Jeffrey Chin pointed out that, even in schools where technology is available, "software, hardware, and Internet connections often go unused because teachers lack the skills and knowledge necessary to integrate them into daily classroom activities."

Chin, a computer literacy teacher at the Elliott Alternative Education Center in Modesto, noted that many of his colleagues must still teach themselves how to run a computer.

"It's like teaching yourself how to drive," he lamented.

"We must ensure," Chin told Congress, "that all students have access to the latest technology *and* that all teachers receive training that enables an effective integration of technology into the curriculum."

The stakes for learning, concluded Chin, are too high to do otherwise.

"I have seen how technology has enhanced the educational experience for students, introducing them to new ideas, and spurring their creativity and enthusiasm in new and different ways," he said.

■ NEA has examined teacher technology training and technical support in a comprehensive, state-by-state assessment of unmet school modernization needs. The results from that assessment have been shown to members of Congress and White House staff and are opening eyes—very, very wide.

Total unmet modernization needs, for everything from school renovations to technology maintenance and repair, amount to $307.6 billion. Of that sum, $253.9 billion is needed for infrastructure and $53.7 billion for technology.

"Nobody doubts these numbers," says NEA researcher Faith Crampton.

That's because the NEA researchers who collaborated on this study worked with NEA state affiliates to unearth state-by-state data.

"We asked our affiliates not to come up with their own data," Crampton stresses. "They had to work with state agencies to find comprehensive, timely, and accurate information on infrastructure and technology needs."

Where state data yielded insufficient information, the NEA researchers consulted independent sources, including policy literature, government Web sites, and online databases of the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Council of State Governments.

"The biggest shock is how big the number is: $307.6 billion for unmet school modernization needs."

—NEA Research staffer Faith Crampton

Dig this deeply, and you'll find some surprises.

"We learned that the enrollment-related cost of constructing new buildings and deferring maintenance is far greater than previously documented," notes NEA staffer Jan Hagey. "The need is *huge*."

"And we discovered that three-quarters of the state technology plans have no cost estimates!" adds NEA researcher Crampton.

■ NEA's school modernization assessment, which began in March 1999, is part of the three-year NEA Legislative

FIFTEEN-MINUTE ACTIVIST

■ **The goal:** Build support in Congress for legislation to modernize America's public schools.

■ **Your assignments:** Urge your senators and your representative to cosponsor bills that would make interest-free school modernization bonds available to states and school districts (H.R. 4094 and S. 1454) and make $1.3 billion in grants and loans available for emergency school repairs in high-needs districts (H.R. 3705 and S. 2124).

■ **Here's how to get started:** Go to www.nea.org.lac/modern. ✔

Change Project. The goal of this groundbreaking initiative: Help NEA affiliates in states with the greatest infrastructure and technology needs develop school modernization action plans.

"At an initial meeting this summer," says Crampton, "we hope to match state affiliates that need legislation with states that have passed meaningful school modernization legislation within the last two years—and are now experienced in the implementation of those new laws."

"The goal," she explains, "is for 'mentor' and 'target' NEA state affiliates to develop an ongoing relationship of networking and assistance, through face-to-face meetings and electronic networking."

The NEA assessment data will be an invaluable lobbying tool in these "target" states.

"This is information that was not previously available," notes Hagey. "Legislators crave state-by-state information to make comparisons—and now *no* state policymaker can say, 'School modernization doesn't concern us.'"

■ At the federal level, NEA's school modernization data "really makes our point that the scope of the problem is so great that the federal government needs to form a partnership with states and local school districts to help subsidize some of these costs," says NEA lobbyist Joel Packer.

The NEA data, Packer adds, have "already been been pretty widely used on Capitol Hill"—from a Democratic lawmaker press conference on a proposed $1.3 billion loan and grant program for emergency school repairs in high-needs districts (H.R. 3705, S. 2124) to a Republican briefing for cosponsors of zero-interest school modernization bond legislation (H.R. 4094 and S. 1454).

"Having this information on both the national and state-by-state level really helps hammer NEA's point home," concludes Packer, "and really helps crystallize the stakes for each member of Congress. Our schools and kids need help *now.*" ✔

For more information on NEA's school modernization campaign, go to www.nea.org/lac/modern.

Unmet Funding Needs for School Modernization

State		State	
Alabama	2,310,853,117	Nebraska	1,922,603,928
Alaska	868,794,867	Nevada	5,573,977,712
Arizona	5,669,527,982	New Hampshire	620,317,062
Arkansas	2,256,405,911	New Jersey	22,029,345,313
California	32,901,183,414	New Mexico	1,750,185,035
Colorado	4,543,245,163	New York	50,675,796,800
Connecticut	5,555,226,320	North Carolina	7,525,524,823
Delaware	1,166,375,768	North Dakota	545,223,536
Florida	5,487,697,936	Ohio	10,592,956,800
Georgia	8,536,952,027	Oklahoma	2,874,081,833
Hawaii	955,443,168	Oregon	2,986,932,022
Idaho	967,791,137	Pennsylvania	10,408,541,747
Illinois	11,328,098,880	Rhode Island	1,583,941,627
Indiana	3,537,737,613	South Carolina	3,268,063,360
Iowa	3,898,924,833	South Dakota	650,174,846
Kansas	2,296,811,280	Tennessee	3,244,784,824
Kentucky	3,127,235,884	Texas	13,654,055,206
Louisiana	3,941,071,195	Utah	9,003,985,557
Maine	684,775,372	Vermont	333,386,471
Maryland	4,785,427,084	Virginia	6,892,107,208
Massachusetts	9,942,061,620	Washington	6,541,506,697
Michigan	9,924,079,040	West Virginia	1,322,390,064
Minnesota	5,423,822,916	Wisconsin	5,718,119,395
Mississippi	1,580,245,504	Wyoming	634,421,353
Missouri	4,451,022,957		
Montana	1,077,299,591	**Total**	**307,570,533,798**

Source: NEA Research & Government Relations, 2000

Heroes & Zeroes

▲ Members of the Georgia Association of Educators, including Elizabeth Rhodes, supported many aspects of Governor Roy Barnes's "A-Plus Education Reform Act," but they lobbied hard to revise a provision that scraps fair dismissal rights for new teachers hired after July 1—and were criticized by folks who wrongly equate due process with "lifetime job security."

GAE

Rhodes and GAE members lost this round; the awful provision is part of the new law. But they're still fighting for the rights of new teachers.

▼ Oregon anti-public education activist Bill Sizemore has drafted almost a quarter of the more than 160 ballot initiatives working their way through the qualifying process for the November 2000 ballot. On his wish list: A measure to increase deductibility of federal taxes on state income tax returns, which would slash funding to public education.

"In this age of attacks on public school funding, it's hard to believe that many would-be supporters of public education are not registered voters," says Oregon Education Association President James K. Sager. "OEA members can have an impact on the elections by encouraging like-minded co-workers, neighbors, and friends to get registered."

▲ To be a hero, you don't have to move mountains, just people. And Steve Romary, an NEA local affiliate leader in New Haven, Indiana, is a definitely a hero in the eyes of elementary teacher Ina Guenin.

"Steve makes himself available to answer questions, gives answers in an expedient manner, and never makes the person asking the question feel foolish," says Guenin. "He has his fellow teachers' welfare at heart, as evidenced by his unselfish giving of time and resources."

▼ Ontario (Canada) Premier Mike Harris, who eliminated teachers' right to bargain over working conditions in 1998, now plans to launch an audit of classroom hours to ensure that teachers "spend more time" in class.

But before Harris begins, he might read a "time-use" study of Nova Scotia teachers just released by their union (www.nstu.ns.ca/timeuse). It reveals that they spend 52.5 hours a week on teaching-related activities—and are "time-poor, stressed, and frustrated with dramatic changes in their profession."

A Governor's Challenge: 'Raise the Raises'

Backed by the NEA state affiliate, Maryland's governor proposes a unique way to attract and retain quality teachers.

When educators in Maryland's Carroll County school district say they're "crossing the line" to bring in needed income, they're not talking about stealing cars. They're talking about stealing away to districts in neighboring Pennsylvania, where starting and mid-range teachers' salaries can be as much as $5,000 more than those at home.

Increasingly, Maryland public school teachers are being forced to cross some line to pay the bills—be it by switching districts, leaving the state, moving to private sector employment, or plain old moonlighting.

"When I was at a high school meeting recently, several people left early to go to their second jobs," laments Cindy Cummings, president of the 1,500-member Carroll County Education Association. "It's pathetic that professional people have to do this, and it has to have an impact on their classes and students. One of my members, who has a brand new baby, works a paper route and only gets three to four hours of sleep a night."

> **"Governor Glendening is underscoring his support for collective bargaining—and encouraging districts to improve salaries more than they planned."**
>
> —Karl Pence, president of the Maryland State Teachers Association

Facing rising teacher turnover—7.5 percent as of last summer—and an impending wave of retirements, Carroll County desperately needs to boost salaries to attract replacements.

With starting teacher pay of only $28,410—for a district in which homes list from $125,000 to $400,000—district recruiters must now reach as far afield as Georgia.

Fortunately, Maryland has a governor who recognizes his state's problem with recruiting and retaining quality educators, and this governor, Parris Glendening, is willing to try something new.

For Fiscal Year 2001, Glendening has proposed an initiative called the Governor's Teacher Salary Challenge Grants, a plan to raise the salary of every Maryland teacher by 10 percent over two years.

The grant concept is simple: If a school district and its union negotiate a minimum salary increase of 4 percent a year over two years, the state will kick in another 1 percent in each of those years. And hard-pressed Maryland districts will also receive a direct state subsidy to reach these targets.

Chris Hartlove

Teaching's a full-time job, but Maryland NEA local leader Cindy Cummings worries that many of her colleagues must moonlight to pay the bills. "It has to have an impact on students," she says.

The state contribution will come out of a $100 million fund replenished by Maryland's tobacco lawsuit settlement—$4 billion over 25 years.

The Maryland State Teachers Association, the NEA state affiliate that helped Glendening draft the grant proposal, is working with the governor to pass the program without amendments that would water it down.

"Some counties wanted to be able to use this $100 million for any district need," notes MSTA government relations director Diana Saquella, "but the governor insisted that this money be dedicated exclusively to supplementing, not supplanting, locally negotiated teacher raises."

At press time, the governor's salary

THE BOTTOM LINE

HEALTH: The number one threat to the nation's public health, the U.S. Supreme Court acknowledged in March, may be tobacco use, particularly among children and adolescents. For more: http://tobaccofreekids.org/reports/fda/scopinion.pdf.

ALCOHOL: Researchers say they are closer to developing medications that could help block Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, the nation's leading preventable cause of mental retardation. For more: http://silk.nih.gov/silk/niaaa1/releases/CharrevNR.htm.

GUNS: The planners of the nation's first Million Mom March, set for Mother's Day, May 14, are calling on Congress to enact common-sense gun control legislation. For more on this NEA-backed event: www.millionmommarch.com.

KIDS: Some 9,000 children are abused daily in America. The good news: President Clinton has signed a bill that will double funding for preventing and prosecuting child abuse. For more: www.usnewswire.com/topnews/Current_Releases/0314-136.html.

grant program stood a very strong chance of being passed by the state legislature. Some reasons why:

■ **The public realizes the need to boost teacher salaries.** In a recent poll, the public supported Glendening's grant proposal by a 71-19 percent margin.

■ **The Maryland State Teachers Association has helped organize a coalition to support this plan.** Cindy Cummings and other MSTA leaders weren't alone when they testified in favor of the governor's proposal before the state Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. They were joined by allies from the state school superintendents, school boards, superintendents, and principals.

"The Cecil County school superintendent actually begged the committee to pass this bill," recalls Cummings. "He said so many teachers live in his county, yet 'cross the line' to teach for better pay in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey."

■ **The salary challenge grants foster local initiative.** MSTA President Karl Pence, who persuaded Governor Glendening to put this plan on the table, calls the challenge grants "a brilliant way to enhance local contract bargaining, and a chance for districts to say 'We can do a little bit more than we planned to do.'"

MSTA prefers local bargaining to "annual begging for state raises," Pence stresses.

"Collective bargaining meets local conditions and has more immediacy for our members," he points out. "It gives them a sense of ownership in compensation issues and encourages experimentation at the local level."

■ **The concept is working already.** Pence says the whole idea of the governor's challenge grant program is to convince local school boards to "raise the raises." And even before Maryland legislators voted on the final FY 2001 budget, that's what happened in Carroll County.

As contract talks got underway in March, the Carroll school board insisted it didn't have the money to fund the challenge grant's 4 percent threshold raise. But "several hundred" CCEA members attended a March 13 school board meeting.

"Some 30 of our members made articulate, eloquent, and sincere appeals for a decent raise," says local leader Cindy Cummings, "and the board finally 'found' enough money for a 4 percent raise this year, for both teachers and support staff. Our next job is to get this grant proposal through the legislature, and our raise through the county commissioners."

■ **The time to raise educators' salaries is now.** "When you give a teacher a salary comparable to that of other professions that require the same education, you're saying the teacher is worthy, a professional," Cummings concludes. "Teachers' self-esteem would improve greatly if they did not have to scrounge for every dollar or 'cross the line' to other states." ✔

For more information, go to the Maryland State Teachers Association Web site at www.msta.nea.org/.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"Our teachers need more than our respect. . .they need a pay raise. If we are serious about our commitment to teachers, and if we really want to attract and retain the best and the brightest in our classrooms, we must come together and help our teachers with a family-supporting, professional salary." ✔

—Maryland Governor Parris Glendening in his State of the State Address, January 19, 2000.

YOUR DUES DID IT

• **Chase Speaks Out:** Critics of teachers' fair dismissal laws claim they protect the incompetent. In a recent hard-hitting press commentary, NEA President Bob Chase talks back. "The idea that K-12 teachers have a job for life—something called 'tenure'—is preposterous," says Chase. "What they have are fair dismissal rights, the right to a fair hearing, and an appeal." For more, go to www.nea.org/publiced/chase/bc000312.html.

• **Attention RA and armchair delegates:** Information on this year's NEA Representative Assembly is online at www.nea.org/ra. There you'll find updates on RA conference schedules, issues, caucuses, logistics, and special events. And for more on the Chicago meeting site, go to www.ieanea.org/features/Chicago/chicago.htm. ✔

Report Card

NAME	GRADE	COMMENTS
Florida Teaching Profession-NEA	A+	FTP-NEA has won the first round of a battle against Governor Jeb Bush's statewide voucher plan. A Florida Circuit Court judge has ruled that, "Tax dollars may not be used to send the children of this state to a private school."
Sodexho Marriott Services, Inc.	Remove From School Grounds	The NEA Board of Directors has approved a boycott of this food and building services contractor because its outsourcing activities "negatively impact NEA members." With $358 million in school contracts in 1999, Sodexho wants an even bigger market share.
The faculty of Sage College, New York	A	Tired of seeing curricula altered, programs cancelled, and student grades changed—all without proper faculty involvement—full-time Sage staffers have organized the Sage Faculty Association and announced plans to affiliate with NEA-New York. Their next step: Win bargaining rights.
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.	F	Caught bullying. After meatcutters at its Jacksonville, Texas, Supercenter voted to unionize, Wal-Mart threatened to change assignments of meat workers across the nation. Now meat department organizing campaigns are underway at 20-plus Wal-Mart stores.

BUDGET: The spending plan okayed in March by the House of Representatives Budget Committee will "build more bombs, protect fewer children," says the Children's Defense Fund. For more: www.childrensdefense.org/budget/budget_res2001.html.

BEHAVIOR: About one in four 12-year-olds say they've purposely destroyed property, and this rate, says the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, varies little by sex, race, or location. For more: www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles1/ojjdp/fs200003.txt.

CIGARETTES: Anti-smoking TV ads seem to be effective with 12- and 13-year-olds, but don't make much of an impact on preventing smoking by kids ages 14 to 15, says a new study. For more: www.apha.org/news/press/2000_journal/mar00.htm.

GAMES: Just over 90 percent of boys now play video games—and average 10 hours a week gaming. Almost a fifth of boys say parents would be upset if they knew what video games kids were playing. For more: www.mediafamily.org/senateviolence.html.

Photos by Vito Starinskas

Step by step, these Vermont paraeducators, organized in a "STEP" committee, are winning more training and respect for their colleagues.

Little Steps to a Big IDEA

Starting with IDEA '97 and some draft state standards, a group of paraeducators work to improve training and communications.

Despite minimal pay and a minimum of formal training, paraeducators in Rutland, Vermont, are making classroom inclusion a reality—be it through tutoring struggling students, helping kids with physical therapy, or integrating special ed students into a general ed setting.

"It's a good job with lots of hard work, and it's steadily becoming a career choice," says Carolyn Godbout, a paraeducator at Rutland High.

Rutland isn't a high-wealth district, but it's rich in para talent and dedication. Fortunately, these paraeducators are Vermonters, no-nonsense pragmatists who aren't afraid to implement big ideas. In this case, it's the big IDEA, the federal Individuals With Disabilities Education Act of 1997.

IDEA '97 recognizes the role that paras play in providing services to students with disabilities. The IDEA legislation also highlights the need for state standards on the training and supervision of paraeducators and supports the involvement of paras as part of the educational team.

Last year, leaders of the 80-member Rutland School Staff Association decided to "model" IDEA '97 right in their own backyard.

"We got started," says Godbout, "when paraeducator Regina Sears put our NEA state affiliate in touch with our superintendent at the time. Both that superintendent and his successor strongly supported this process."

With the help of Vermont NEA, Rutland paras formed a nine-member STEP committee—short for Standards, Education, and Training for Paraeducators—and started to analyze the role and needs of paraeducators in the district's five schools.

For a benchmark, the STEP committee followed draft standards developed by Vermont NEA's Paraeducator Standards Task Force.

These draft standards have been submitted to the State Board of Education. The board must adopt statewide paraeducator standards by December 2000.

Among other things, the draft Vermont NEA standards call for preservice education and post-hire orientation for paraeducators, 15 hours of continuing education, and accurate job descriptions.

These draft standards also call for ongoing para supervision and feedback from licensed educators, "consultative" evaluations of paras, and teacher training on how to work with paraeducators.

The STEP committee, chaired by Carolyn Godbout, used this draft to set similar goals for Rutland schools. With

KUDOS TO. . .

ESP Grievance Rights Saved in Idaho

. . . A flood of messages from members of the Idaho Education Association—plus powerful testimony by 16 ESP and teacher members—has persuaded the state House Education Committee to "hold" a bill gutting ESP grievance rights, killing the measure for this session. IEA members effectively recounted situations in their districts that called for use of the grievance process.

. . . **Poplar (Montana) Education Association** has won the reinstatement of nontenured special ed teacher Lynne Rhoades. At an arbitration hearing, six colleagues testified that Rhoades is a caring, effective educator, while the union pointed out that administrators failed to follow evaluation procedures specified in the contract—and secretly loaded Rhoades's personnel file with negative memos.

. . . Grassroots lobbyists from the **Georgia Association of Educators** have persuaded legislators to boost the ESP pension benefit—from $10.50 to $12 for each year of service. ✔

THE BOTTOM LINE

LANGUAGES: About 260 "dual-immersion schools" are now operating. The schools typically help both Spanish- and English-speaking students develop skills in the other language. For more: www.ed.gov/Speeches/03-2000/000315.html.

LITERACY: Children from middle-class homes enter first grade with vocabularies that average 20,000 words. Kids from low-income homes start with 5,000 words. For more: www.tcf.org/ideas2000/Issues/Education/Universal_Preschool.pdf.

JUVENILE CRIME: Contrary to public perception, the numbers of crimes by kids are actually dropping. The early 1990s did see increases, but rates are now no higher than a generation ago. For more: www.ncjrs.org/html/ojjdp/jjbul2000_02_2/contents.html.

DIGITAL AGE : A household with kids is now as likely to have a computer as cable TV. Households with children are almost as likely to have Internet access as a newspaper subscription. For more: www.childrenspartnership.org/pub/low_income/index.html.

strong central office support, the committee surveyed paras, teachers, and administrators to prioritize their goals.

The committee then started a drive to realize these goals—through bargaining, administrative changes, and just plain old Vermont problem solving.

"We went right down the priority list," says Godbout. "We asked ourselves, 'Where do we stand, what do we have control over now, and how do we get to where we're going?'"

"This is a good job with lots of hard work," says para Carolyn Godbout.

The Rutland campaign is still a work in progress, but it's already starting to yield results in areas like:

■ **Continuing education.** During a make-up day at the end of the last school year, 80 Rutland paras attended a for-credit workshop on "behavior management of difficult children." They received course credit for it to help them move up the salary scale. The district is increasingly funding para training, be it at district-run technology workshops or professional sessions offered at Vermont NEA conferences.

■ **Pre-service education.** The director of Rutland High School's Stafford Technical Center has interviewed the STEP committee about courses needed to prepare students for a paraeducator career, background that will guide administrators in the curriculum planning process.

■ **Staff communications.** Paraeducators at the Grade 3-6 Rutland Intermediate School and the district's two elementary schools now have monthly meetings with building administrators "to discuss concerns and educational opportunities," reports Godbout.

"And if a para is invited to a child's IEP meeting," she adds, "that's supported by administrators through paid duty time. When there's communication, when everybody's on the same page, the child will get the best of what we offer."

■ **Personal growth.** Through self-organization and a collaborative relationship with Superintendent Mary Moran and site administrators, Rutland paraeducators are exhibiting more self-confidence.

"People are more willing to ask more questions," points out Godbout, "and step out of their comfort zone."

Paras in other states may not yet have draft standards to work from, but they do have IDEA '97, the federal law.

"This is the first law that recognizes the important role that paras play," stresses NEA staffer Nesa Chappelle. "This is the vehicle that will provide paras with necessary training for the job. I encourage *all* paras to ensure that their states and districts are providing the supervision and training required by IDEA '97."

Chappelle leads the 20-member NEA Paraeducator Task Force, which has formed a national cadre to do presentations and training on the impact of IDEA '97.

At *NEA Today* press time, the task force was releasing a series of IDEA '97 informational materials, including a question-and-answer brochure with a companion video, a handbook—with models—on paraeducator standards and professional development, and an action guide on using IDEA '97. ✔

"When everybody's on the same page, the child gets the best of what we offer, and awesome things happen."

—Paraeducator Carolyn Godbout

For more on the NEA Paraeducator Task Force training cadre and informational materials, contact Nesa Chappelle at Nchappelle@nea.org. To reach Carolyn Godbout, send an E-mail message to Cgodbout@rutlandhs.k12.vt.us.

BASICS FOR BEGINNERS

IDEAs to Get Started

Paraeducators don't have to wait on other people to start implementing IDEA '97 in their own district. "Assess where you are now, and then set goals and priorities," advises Carolyn Godbout, a para in Rutland, Vermont. "Then ask, 'What can we do now, and what won't cost a lot?'"

The next steps, adds Rutland para Regina Sears, are to:

■ Get the support and involvement of administrators, and form a committed team of paraeducators representing each campus in your district.

■ Select a strong facilitator/chairperson, a reliable recorder and timekeeper, and a central meeting place.

■ Hold regular committee meetings year 'round—with refreshments—and don't be afraid to ask your district for paid time and mileage.

■ Contact your NEA state affiliate for help and guidance, and get to work.

"Finally, don't forget to work with parents," stresses Godbout. "They are the best advocates you'll find for the needs of kids." ✔

Do'ers Profile

MAX BOCHMANN

■ ***Name and profession:*** Max Bochmann, school bus mechanic

■ ***NEA local affiliate:*** Naperville (Illinois) Unit Maintenance Association

■ ***Position:*** Newly elected employee trustee of the 150,000-member Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF)

■ ***Latest accomplishment:*** With strong support from his NEA state affiliate and another union, AFSCME, Bochmann defeated three "finance manager types" for a spot on the Fund's Board of Trustees. In his grassroots campaign, Bochmann convinced members of the $15 billion Fund that classified school employees "deserve a place at the table."

Bochmann and six other elected Fund trustees are responsible for asset allocation and setting benchmarks for money managers "to make as much money for the Fund as we can safely make." The trustees also hire the firms that provide the Fund investment advice and actuarial expertise.

"My goal," says Bochmann, "is to ensure that Fund participants have the information they need on a timely basis to make their own decisions."

Bochmann is also on guard against any plan to convert IMRF from a "defined benefit" plan to a "defined contribution" plan—a move that would shift financial risk to employees and ends the "guaranteed lifetime" aspect of the annuity.

■ ***Words of wisdom:*** "ESP are in every electoral district in the state. If we want something, we can do it!" *(You can reach Bochmann at MBOC@aol.com. For more on his Fund, go to www.imrf.org.)*

DIGITAL DIVIDE: Only 2 percent of kids in low-income, rural households have home Internet access. Meanwhile, 49 percent of college-educated individuals can log on. For more: www.childrenspartnership.org/pub/low_income/content.html#1.

CHILD CARE CHALLENGE: Three-quarters of American working women, says a just-released AFL-CIO survey, do not receive any child care benefits whatsoever from their employers. For more: www.aflcio.org/women/survey_lead.htm.

TEEN PREGNANCIES: The number of pregnancies per 1,000 adolescents in the industrial world varies widely, from over 100 in Russia, to 12 in the Netherlands. The U.S. rate: 84 per 1,000. For more: www.agi-usa.org/pubs/journals/3201400.html.

POPULATION TRENDS : One of every nine people in the United States is now of Hispanic origin, making Hispanics the fastest-growing ethnic minority in the nation. For more: www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hispanic/ho99.html.

RIGHTS WATCH

The Supreme Court and Prayer, At Football Games

A Texas case, soon to be decided, could create an important precedent on government and religion.

The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to issue a decision by early July in a major case involving school prayer. What's at stake? Americans United for Separation of Church and State has prepared this summary.

■ What's this case all about?
In fall 1995, hundreds of students and sports fans from Santa Fe, Texas, attended a public high school football game. Before the game, school officials gave the microphone to a student elected by classmates to recite a prayer over the public address system.

Two students, one Catholic and the other Mormon, recognized that it was not their prayer and thought something was amiss.

Parents of the two children troubled by the football game prayer, with help from the Texas affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, tried to negotiate with school officials, asking them to stop promoting prayer at school events. When those attempts failed, the parents filed suit in federal court.

On February 26, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled 2-1 that invocations before football games are unconstitutional. The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear an appeal.

■ What's wrong with students praying at a football game?
Nothing. No one is trying to take away an individual's right to pray. If students want to pray before, during, or after a football game, that's entirely up to them.

The issue is whether the school can get involved with the religious exercise by turning over the school's public address system for a prayer endorsed by the school—a prayer that everyone is forced to listen to.

■ How is the school getting involved with the prayer?
First, the school facilitates a student election that allows the student body to vote for a classmate to deliver the prayer at the game.

Then school officials turn over the school's public address system to broadcast a prayer to school students at an official school event. The school is setting the time, place, and length of religious worship.

■ Isn't this about free speech?
Absolutely not. There is a critical difference between private individual speech and speech promoted by the government.

Consider this analogy: A group of people can go to a public park and exercise their free speech. But once the state decides to help broadcast one person's speech to everyone in the park because it is popular, that address becomes state-sponsored speech.

Public schools must be neutral on religion to protect the rights of everyone. Students should not be pressured to pray.

■ If a majority of the students want a prayer before a game, shouldn't the majority rule?
Our First Amendment rights are not open to a popularity contest. Prayer is a deeply personal experience, best left to individuals, their families, and conscience. It is not the government's job to encourage prayer.

School officials and student majorities should never be allowed to bully other children into religious worship. The Bill of Rights provides for individual freedom of conscience, not a tyranny of the majority.

■ Doesn't the school want "non-sectarian" and "non-proselytizing" prayer?
There's no such thing as "non-sectarian" and "non-proselytizing" prayer. Prayer is deeply private and does not exist in a "one size fits all" format. In any community, there are diverse religious communities, with different religious traditions and people who have chosen no spiritual path at all. No prayer would please everyone. In this Santa Fe case, most of the prayers recited ended "in Jesus' name" —hardly non-sectarian.

■ How does this controversy affect religious minorities?
Since the students elect a classmate to deliver a prayer before a game, students of minority faiths are unlikely to get chosen.

As a result, religious minorities who want to attend their own school events have to endure school-promoted worship that often conflicts with what they are taught at home and at their house of worship.

If you belong to a minority faith and it's not your prayer the school is broadcasting, the state is effectively telling you, "too bad." Public school students should never be made to feel like second-class citizens at their own school.

■ If this is just about prayer at a football game, what is the legal significance of this case?
A Supreme Court ruling in favor of the Santa Fe School District would create a precedent for greater government promotion of religious worship. This would represent a radical departure from Court precedent that has mandated government neutrality.

If public school students can elect a classmate to lead students in prayer at an official school event, what's to say that the same practice couldn't be applied to homeroom every morning?

Years ago, supporters of state-sponsored religion would tell dissenters that if they didn't like mandated Christian prayer and Bible reading every morning, they could wait in the hall. This decision could turn back the clock toward those days.

This month's column is adapted from Americans United for Separation of Church and State. ✔

For more on this case, go to www.au.org/pr32800.htm or www.au.org/cs1001.htm.

THE BOTTOM LINE

MATH ACHIEVEMENT: The percentage of eighth graders scoring at or above basic levels in math has jumped from 52 to 62 percent, according to the latest national figures. For more: www.ed.gov/Speeches/soae/2000/graphs-1.html#1-2.

WAGE RATES: Just how badly does the United States need a higher minimum wage? In 1998, 29 percent of all American workers were working in jobs that did not pay enough to keep the worker above the poverty level. For more: www.epinet.org.

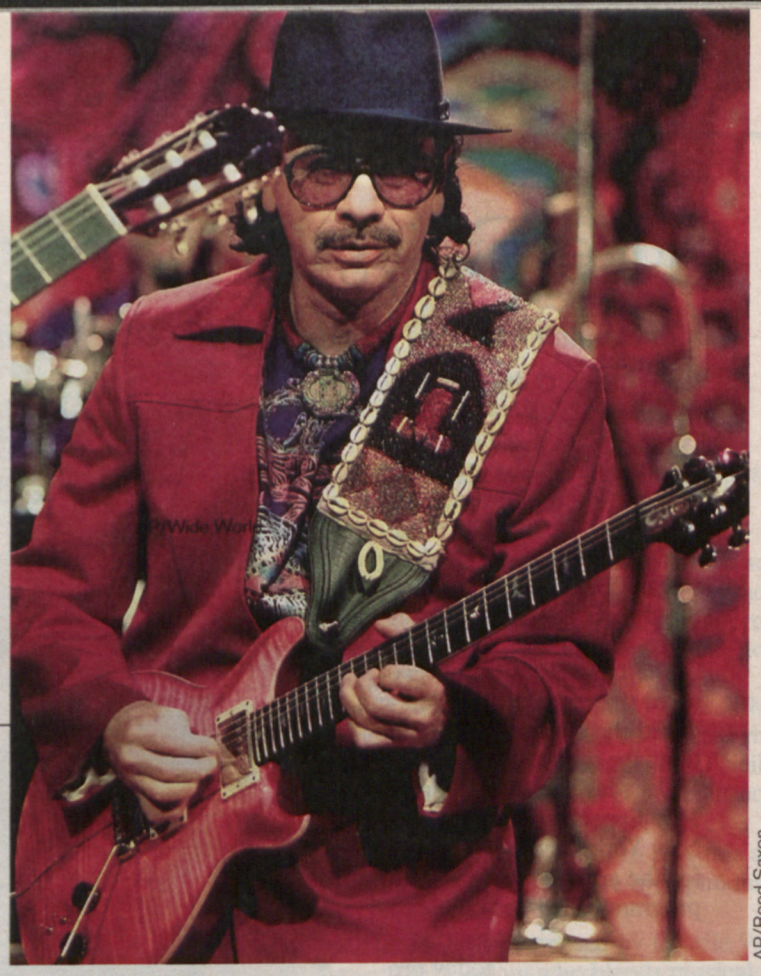
THE ECONOMY: In California's Silicon Valley, 63 people become millionaires each day, and the median home price runs $410,000, triple the national average. Of the valley's 20,000 homeless, 34 percent hold full-time jobs. www.inequality.org/news.html.

POVERTY: A new report charges that local officials are denying food stamps to adults leaving welfare. Food stamp rolls fell 37 percent between 1994 and 1999. For more: www.communitychange.org/nationalcampaign/poorsupports/default.asp.

INTERVIEW

Carlos Santana On Recruiting Minority Teachers

Scorching the musical landscape with his Grammy-winning sound, guitar legend Carlos Santana fires up people of color to teach.



AP/Reed Saxon

Do you love music?" asks Carlos Santana in his new 30-second television spot for NEA. "Do you love art, books, science? We all love something. Whatever you love, think about teaching it."

Hotter than hot, Carlos Santana's quintuple-platinum CD "Supernatural" is a diverse blending of Latin-rock riffs, Afro-Cuban rhythms, world beat rap, and mainstream pop vocals. It's a musical lesson he hopes will play out in classrooms all across the country as his NEA public service announcement, now airing coast to coast, helps attract Hispanics, African-Americans, and other talented minorities to teach.

Days before embarking on his Tour 2000 through Japan, Europe, Canada, and the United States, Santana spoke with *NEA Today's* Michelle Y. Green.

Q: Tell us what teachers have meant in your life.
One teacher in particular really made a difference in my young life and in what I ended up doing. Mr. Knudsen was special to me because he knew something I didn't know about myself.

I moved to the United States from Tijuana, Mexico when I was 13. For me it was like entering into Disneyland. Mr. Knudsen had taken the time to look at the grades I had prior to coming to the United States.They were pathetic. But he believed in me. He told me I had a great imagination and a "great eye" for art. He also told me that he had heard from the grapevine that I was a pretty good musician.

The next day our school went on a field trip to an art museum in San Francisco. That's when he told me that in the real world, there was no room for fifty-fifty, meaning I had to give 100 percent to become an artist or a musician, to follow my dreams. When he told me that, I started crying. I had never had anyone care about me as a person. He had passion for me an as individual. He wasn't painting everyone with the same brush.

Q: You're helping NEA recruit people of color to become teachers. Why is that important?
I have a personal passion about education. And I think a truly great teacher has to have a great heart—a capacity for passion and compassion.

All teachers need the ability to truly impact young people's minds to the point where they would never allow themselves to be placed in a situation where they feel they are a lesser person, or a loser, and that's where teachers of color, in particular, can make a difference.

They can reach the kids who are being told in life that they're not good enough because of the color of their skin, the clothes they can afford, or because they speak a different language. Often, teachers of color can be valuable role models and support systems for those kids because they've been there, they know what it feels like to be in their shoes. It's important that when that kid looks up from his or her desk, no matter what color, that kid sees someone who looks like them, someone who understands where they're coming from.

RESOURCES

- The Carlos Santana public service announcement is a joint effort of NEA and the California Teachers Association. To see the Carlos Santana/NEA public service announcement, just visit the NEA Web site at www.nea.org
- *New from NEA: The National Directory of Successful Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers* Individual orders are free of charge to NEA members. Contact mwilliams @nea.org, or call 202/822-7927.
- *The Milagro Foundation supports educational efforts to help children and youth live healthy, literate, and culturally enriched lives. For more: write P.O. Box 9125, San Rafael, CA 94912 or visit www.santana.com/milagro/*
- *For more on Carlos Santana, visit www.santana.com*

Q: How about what you do in your own work. Can music contribute to building a better society?
I believe it's important to do something you love. We all have a part to play in making this a better world, whether it's uniting people through music, which is what I try to do, being good parents, or working in our communities.

We also need to give back from whatever success we're blessed to have. Success isn't about being top on the charts or having a lot of money. It's about being good at whatever you do and finding a way to help other people along the way. That's a very important message to give to our kids, especially today.

> **"What you learn from a teacher can change your life."**
>
> —Carlos Santana

Q: You're a "crossover" musician, uniting all different kinds of people. What lesson does that hold for teachers in a multicultural classroom?
It took a lot of things coming together for the "Supernatural" CD to become a hit. It started with a personal vision I had, but that vision grew and evolved as other people joined me and began to see the same thing.

The wonderful musicians I was blessed to work with came from everywhere. Our musical styles were all over the map. But it all came down to grace and synchronicity.

That's how it should be in the classroom, students and teachers of all different backgrounds learning how to change the planet for the better. And there's no better place to learn about harmony than in the classroom. There's so much to learn on each person alone.

Teachers can help change the world, like a wonderful teacher, Mr. Knudsen, changed mine. What you learn from a teacher can change your life.

Q: What programs does your Milagro Foundation support?
Milagro means miracle. My wife Deborah and I wanted a way to help children live healthy lives that are enriched in every way possible. And we especially wanted to strengthen arts education, to enhance the quality of young lives in the same way music and art have enhanced mine. Milagro, which we started in 1998, supports organizations that are doing wonderful things like creating band programs in the schools to providing musical instruments to low-income families and educational programs for at-risk kids. ✔

Learning

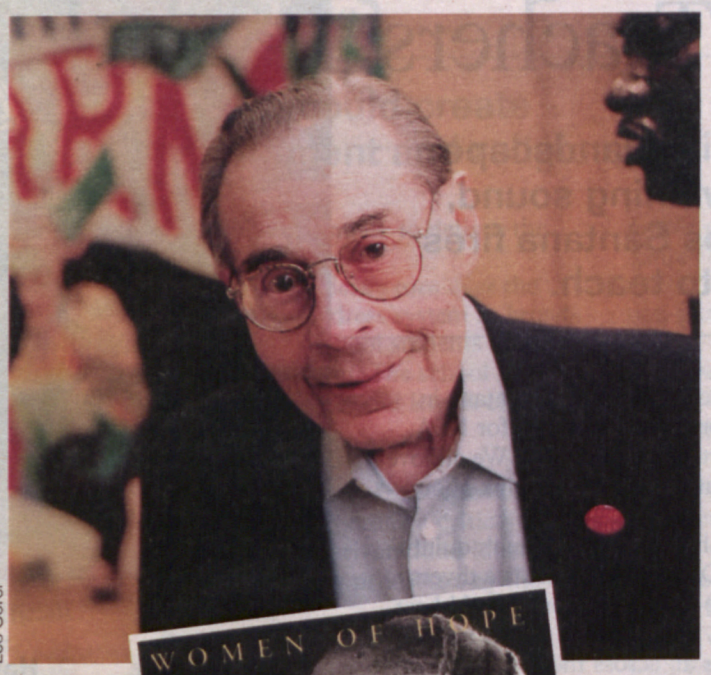
The Days of Bread and Roses

A union-built education program uses the arts to teach about work.

When girls and women in the Lawrence, Massachusetts textile mills went on strike in 1912, their slogan "Bread and Roses" captured their desire for a living wage—and a life.

The Lawrence strikers captured the nation's attention and paved the way to better conditions for many thousands.

Decades later, they inspired **Moe Foner**, a union leader in New York City with a passion for the arts, to create a cultural program called Bread and Roses that today provides resources such as teacher guides for integrating art and labor studies.



Leo Sorel

Foner, now 84, has focused on this work with students for the past five years. One product has been the Bread and Roses "Women of Hope" poster series, which features African-American, Hispanic, and Asian-American women who've been inspiring role models (see inset).

One of Foner's new series is built around the work of Ralph Fasanella, an artist world-famous for his paintings of American working people. The guide for this series can help students learn more about their own diverse backgrounds.

Foner works with dozens of New York schools, where children study labor topics and create original art. Some works are exhibited at a gallery run by Foner's union, Local 1199. All the others are exhibited at the schools.

Bread and Roses started out in the 1950s as a cultural resource for 1199's members. Foner recruited stars—Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Sidney Poitier, Alan Alda, Harry Belafonte—to perform at both union events and inside hospitals and other places where his union's members worked.

"Culture is like chicken soup," says Foner. "It may not solve every problem, but it sure can't hurt. You can see it in our members' faces. They tell us, 'This made my day. Now I can continue and feel good about what I'm doing.'"

Impact:
Bread and Roses' field-tested teacher guides on working, sweatshops, and why unions matter have introduced thousands of students to labor history and current labor issues.

For More:
Contact Terry Sullivan at 212/631-4565 to order Bread and Roses posters, teacher guides, or other materials. Contact Staci Lightburn at 212/631-4569 to arrange for a traveling exhibit or a speaker. For the latest on the Bread and Roses Web site, which will showcase teaching materials, check the *NEA Today* site at www.nea.org/neatoday. ✔

Trends

Is Internet-based distance learning as effective as a live classroom? It can be. But students need to be advised in advance that distance learning takes a lot of self-motivation. Faculty need to be trained in online instruction

Who says? *Quality on the Line*, a report sponsored in part by NEA that provides 24 benchmarks to help establish quality distance learning in higher education.

For the detailed list and more, visit the Institute for Higher Education Policy Web site at www.ihep.com.

Money Smarts for Girls

Innovator: Joline Godfrey

Job:
Founder and president of Independent Means, Inc., a California-based company that promotes entrepreneurship and economic self-sufficiency among teenage girls

Bright Idea:
When it comes to money matters, Joline Godfrey likes to note, girls are not at the head of the class: "Boys trade baseball cards," she says, "girls collect dolls."

So, for boys, trading stocks is just another part of the game, while many grown women will shudder when asked about investing. Independent Means, Inc. hopes to change all that by empowering girls with financial know-how.

"Our goal is to make the next generation of girls economically powerful," says Godfrey.

Independent Means offers programs and products to educate young women about money. In Camp $tart-Up, girls work in teams to develop a viable business plan. At Club Invest, a workshop, girls create their own investment portfolio. The National Teen Business Plan Competition awards five girls $2,500 in seed capital and national recognition.

Independent Means also offers workshops for teachers, helps develop after-school programs, offers online resources, licenses curriculum, and networks women who work to motivate girls toward financial independence.

Next Steps:
Godfrey will soon launch a new Web site, DollarDiva.com, an online investment resource for young women.

For More:
Call 800/350-1816 or visit www.independentmeans.com. ✔

Bob Riha, Jr.

Portrait of a Young Tough

Most psychologists, notes Duke University's Philip Rodkin, think violent children tend to be misfits rejected by other children. Rodkin's research says otherwise.

Rodkin and three colleagues surveyed 950 students in grades four through six, along with their teachers, from 20 schools in urban, suburban, and rural communities in Illinois and North Carolina.

The survey asked who is "really cool," friendly, athletic, studious, shy—and who starts fights. Teachers rated their students. Students rated themselves as well as each other.

Patric Patel

Who are the violent students?
Some of the "coolest" boys were the most violent. Of the 40 percent of boys who were rated popular, two-thirds were "pro-social"—studious, cooperative, friendly.

But the other third were highly aggressive. Their classmates said they often caused fights and disruptions.

These popular tough kids were more violence-prone than a group of socially rejected boys who also got into fights.

The data provide indirect evidence that the popular violent boys are bullies. They were rated "cool" by all types of girls and by most types of boys, but not by unpopular boys. That's probably because the unpopular boys are their victims.

Why are the boys who start fights popular?
Our society has ambivalent feelings about male violence, an ambivalence that's reflected in student social structure. Movies help cause our interest in violence, but they also reflect it.

If a boy is aggressive and shy, he won't be popular. But if he's aggressive and athletic, he can be.

Sometimes violence is functional.

What about girls?
Violent girls in the study were only considered "cool" by other violent girls. Aggression is devalued for girls. That's deeply entrenched in our culture.

What can educators do about violence and bullying?
There's no one approach. Educators can do better at reducing bullying and violence if they understand the role that violence plays in the children's social structure.

For example, educators sometimes try to reform a bully by teaching him better social skills. But for the popular violent boys in this survey, social skills weren't the problem—they were doing fine.

A better approach might be to encourage the boy to develop another talent as an alternate route to popularity.

Most teachers do know the personal dynamics at work in their classrooms, according to the study. Teacher ratings of students closely matched what the children said about each other and about themselves.

For More:
For more on this study, go to www.apa.org/journals/dev/dev36114.html.

Striking a Chord for Nonviolence

Innovator: Scarlett O'Neill

Job:
Fifth-grade teacher, Wilson Elementary, Westfield, New Jersey

Bright Idea:
Scarlett O'Neill has taken "Join Hands," a song about gun violence, and used it to engage her fifth graders in critical thinking about guns and violence. In the process, she's taught the song's composer a lesson, too—about how educators can be strong allies for social change.

When O'Neill first heard "Join Hands," she was struck by the tragic lyrics. Realizing that its spirited rhythms would also strike a chord with her students, O'Neill in 1998 incorporated the song into a lesson plan about nonviolence and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday.

"It's so much more powerful to play this song and do these activities than to have me share my opinions or read from a book," says O'Neill.

"Join Hands" was composed by Charlie Wine, a Leonard Bernstein Artist Fellow who blends musical styles to reach young people. In 1999, after the shootings in Littleton, Colorado, Wine offered his song as a free online resource.

Wine and his twin brother, Jim, also created an organization called Voices of the World, whose mission is peace education through the use of creative arts.

When the Wine brothers discovered how O'Neill was incorporating their work into her classroom, they realized—not surprisingly—that they could learn a lot from a teacher on how to teach about nonviolence.

O'Neill's materials are now available on the Wines' Web site. Educators in 45 states and 25 countries have already accessed her free, online study guide for teachers, which includes interdisciplinary learning activities and links.

Rachelle Omenson

Study Guide 1.0 includes music, the work of Langston Hughes and other poets, quotations by Dr. King and Robert Kennedy, resources, lesson plans, and creative learning activities that can provide a measurable account of the student's engagement. Version 1.5 of the downloadable CD includes additional modules for music, arts, sports, and peacemaking.

Next Steps:
This year, O'Neill will use "Join Hands" to study the constitutional amendment granting the right to bear arms. Following a summer 2000 tour to Johannesburg, Voices of the World will release an international recording from South Africa with introductions by Nobel Peace Prize laureates and lessons that focus on Nelson Mandela's Rainbow Revolution.

For More:
Contact O'Neill at 908/789-4605 or visit the Web at www.poesia-per-musica.com/VOW_Study_Guide/teachers.html. ✔

NEA Innovators

"Paraeducators who work with special needs children are the link between life and death for many of them. I am proud to work with them and all of NEA's paraeducators," says Nessa Chappelle of NEA's Teaching and Learning unit.

Chappelle first worked in NEA's Human and Civil Rights unit, then left the organization to teach. She set up the first Multicultural High School in Washington, D.C.

Chappelle returned to NEA in 1994 and is now the lead staff for the Paraeducators' Task Force.

This group just released two publications. *The NEA Paraeducator's Handbook* offers a framework for standards and competencies for paras. *IDEA and Paraeducators —Frequently Asked Questions* examines the impact of the1997 IDEA legislation. For free copies, call 202/822-7350 or visit the Web at www.nea.org.

The Bard Isn't Hard

A North Carolina teacher learns how to make Shakespeare —or any lesson—captivating to high school students.

Photos by Chris Seward

"Vary your approaches," says Becky Wheeler, a 29-year teaching veteran. "The hands-on approach is what makes learning come alive for students."

Alas. Hamlet had better luck getting through to Yorick's skull than many teachers who try to reach their students with Shakespeare. Not so for Becky Wheeler and eight other teachers who took part in an interactive arts education program that brings the Bard to life.

And using some of the same techniques as that workshop, teachers of all subjects can achieve dramatic results.

"When I heard about the workshop," says Wheeler, a veteran English teacher at Carver High School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, "I thought it would be inspiring and reawaken my approach to Shakespeare. It did all that and more."

Shakespeare Lives!, the workshop developed by the North Carolina School of the Arts in collaboration with the new Globe Theatre in London, selects teachers from nine North Carolina high schools to participate in five, full-day Saturday workshops.

The topic is Shakespeare, but what's really center stage is interactive learning. Teachers, who all receive an in-service stipend, come away reinvigorated with insights on how to make lessons capture students' imaginations.

Wheeler's workshop group literally moved to the beat of Shakespeare's prose. They learned dramatic techniques and breathing exercises. They studied period dress, customs, and music. And they traveled to the International Shakespeare Globe Center in London, where their final exam consisted of a midnight performance of *Julius Caesar* on the stage of the Globe. Wheeler, a neophyte performer, played Brutus.

"It was a true high," says Wheeler. "As Julius Caesar was holding onto me, there were tears in my eyes. I was totally engrossed."

Wheeler's now off stage, with a new outlook on how interactive learning can grab a student—in any subject area.

In her own classes, rather than having students struggle to memorize large sections of a play, Wheeler now takes a line of a play or sonnet, divides the class into small groups to discuss the line, and has students freeze into a position to act it out.

"This gets kids on their feet, gets them involved and excited," she says.

Instead of having students do small research projects, Wheeler has each student adopt Shakespearean actors and E-mail them five questions.

Previously hesitant to use film ver-

Donovan Quintero

How I Did It

Kenn Van Pelt
High school drama and health teacher
Chinle, Arizona

"My arts program has a Native American twist, which has students gaining a new appreciation for drama—and is inspiring a growing number of them to go on to college."

Students today want to know what's in it for them when they take a class. At Chinle High School on the Navajo Nation, I tell my Native American drama students that theater can help them earn college scholarships.

And, they can even make acting a career.

Storytelling is very natural to the Diné, so instead of reading current plays and acting them in traditional style, we rewrite popular stories with a Native American twist. We've retold *Jack and the Beanstalk* as a tale about a Native American girl and a corn stalk. We've reworked *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with coyote stories that are told in the Diné culture.

Retelling the plays allows the students to learn all aspects of drama and use their imagination, while passing on cultural traditions to the young children who are often our audience.

This has been extremely successful. Eight years ago, I was asked to teach a theater class that had only four students. Now I teach three full classes, and, this year, 185 students tried out for the Canyon Players Troupe, our after-school drama group.

We compete at local and state competitions, and my students have won thousands of dollars in scholarships for higher education.

sions of Shakespeare's work, Wheeler now shows several movies of the same play and engages her class in comparative discussions.

"It makes great critics out of the students," she says.

Wheeler suggests that teachers give students a little independence and a final product to work toward. In her classes, rather than reading Shakespeare and telling students what's there, Wheeler now steps in only if they need help deciphering a passage.

"It gives them pride as they discover they can figure him out," she notes. "We did scenes from *Julius Caesar* with one group opting to perform on stage before a live audience and the other in class," she explains. "If there's a final product, you'll get much more commitment, and a much better end."

Every teacher, Wheeler believes, should take a drama course, to add "to your enthusiasm." Drama "puts a little more oomph into what you're doing."

"It puts a little more oomph into what you're doing."

—Becky Wheeler, high school English teacher, on the merits of taking a good professional development workshop

"I've been teaching a long time," she adds, and taking this workshop "was a revelation for me. It offers a new faith, a new voice, a new incentive for teachers to get involved." ✔

—Michelle Y. Green

For more information, contact Becky Wheeler at 336/727-2987 or Marla Carpenter at the North Carolina School of the Arts, 336/770-3337, E-mail: carpem@ncarts.edu. Visit www.shakespeares-globe.org/education.

One freshman, George Denzepi, visited my room when he missed the bus one day. I gave him a play that I was thinking about performing and asked him to draw a set, sketch some costumes, and create a director's block and floor plan. Nine days later, he returned with that and more—he wanted to be the director and had a cast!

George went on to win best actor at the Native American Drama and Arts Festival in his junior year and, in his senior year, was the first to win five awards at the festival.

Today, he's being cast in a new Warner Bros. film.

[DILEMMA]

How do you get the local media to cover the *good* news in schools ?

The Nogales Unified School District is located on the southern-most border of Arizona. Our small, hometown-type newspaper comes out twice a week, and it doesn't have the staff to cover even a fraction of the various school events.

What our district did was hire an English teacher with journalism experience—me—to write press releases and articles on both district and individual school happenings.

Most times, the paper runs the articles just as they are submitted. Sometimes, a staff member will use the article as the basis of a news story and simply call for a few more quotes. We average three school news events a week, between what I submit and the paper itself covers.

I get paid an addendum, but it works out to a small fee per week. It's far less than the district would pay for a full-time public relations person, yet I'm able to supplement my income while providing a much-needed service.

Kathy Scott
High school English teacher
Nogales, Arizona

■ Don't wait for the local media to show up. It doesn't work that way. Send the good news to the media!

In Buncombe County, North Carolina, our local TV station shows a tape each morning that features good news from any one of the many schools in the area. WLOS-TV encourages teachers to send in tapes—and, from personal experience, I know how students love being taped, ending with a hearty "Good morning, Carolinas" greeting for viewers to wake up to.

Carol Fabrey
Vocational middle grades teacher
Asheville, North Carolina

Ted Pitts

■ I have found several ways that work.

First, I have the E-mail addresses of three local newspaper writers, and I E-mail them directly. This works great, because when they have questions, they can respond and we don't have to play phone tag.

Second, when students do "good works" or have done some really neat research project, I have them write the press release and fax it to the local papers.

Third, our PTSA has created a form that teachers can fill out with pertinent information about a story. Then the parents reach the writers for us. This is great, because parents feel in the loop, and they are also doing a great service for the staff and the students.

Annie Strozyk
Gifted and talented resource teacher
Columbia, Maryland

■ Recognize that not all school events are newsworthy. We might think that a chorus concert or science fair is worth coverage because the children have worked so hard, but how does that differ from concerts or fairs at other schools?

Choose your calls to the media wisely. Is the event timely—a pet food drive during Be Kind to Animals Week, or a mock election project just before Election Day?

If you have an event scheduled well in advance, send the media a press release. A phone call can be forgotten when news staffs are sent to cover breaking news. A press release will still be there on the desk when things slow down.

Reporters also like to have press releases at events. The more information they have on paper, the more they can focus on what's really happening, rather than just making sure they have the school's name spelled right.

Susan Ayers
Education technician
Bath, Maine

■ We have students write articles about their recent accomplishments and club activities and send these pieces to the local or city newspapers.

Those articles that are published are then posted where the entire student body and faculty can see them. Students appreciate this acknowledgment of what they've done.

And it's great p.r.!

Myriam Santiago-Esfahani
High school Spanish teacher
Plant City, Florida

Got an Answer?

How do you make life easier for a new teacher?

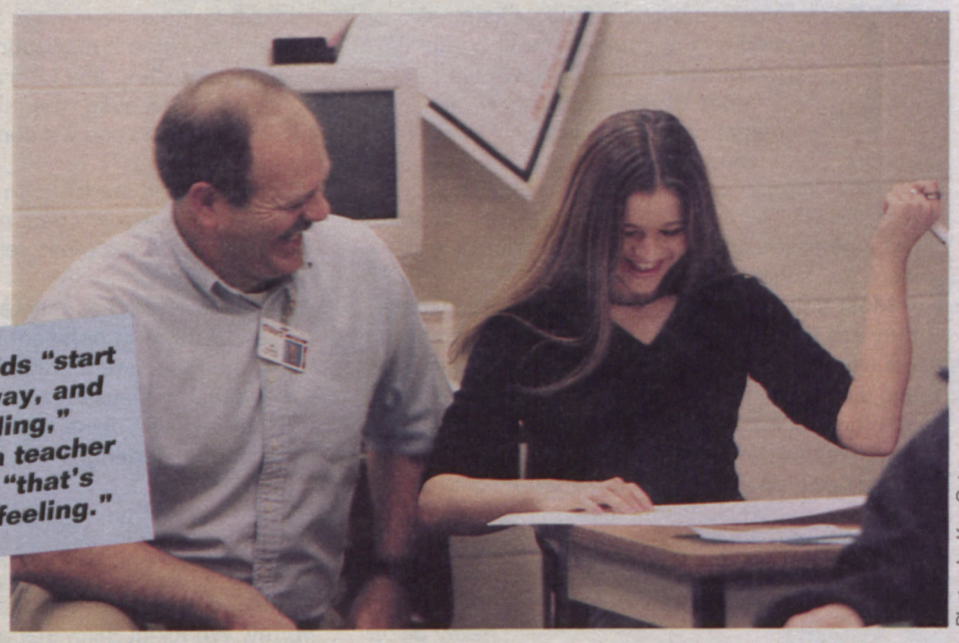
Send your answer by regular mail, by Fax to 202/822-7206, or by E-mail to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org.

Please include your name, city, state, job title, and grade level, if applicable.

Published respondents will receive a new *NEA Today* mug!

At-Risk Kids Discover New Frontier

Nebraska educators develop a school-within-a-school to help bright students who just . . . don't . . . care.



Photos by Ken Seivers

When at-risk kids "start making headway, and they start smiling," says Nebraska teacher Jeff Koerten, "that's an awesome feeling."

Every high school teacher has faced these students. They're not really slow learners. They don't have any particular learning disability, and they're not getting any special ed help.

Sometimes, these students will even say things that reveal a sharp mind and the ability to learn. But, most of the time, their minds just wander in class. Their school careers go nowhere.

In many schools, these students may languish at the back of the classroom—until they decide to drop out.

But at Millard South High School in the suburbs around Omaha, Nebraska, these students get referred to the New Frontier school-within-a-school for their freshman and sophomore years.

The goal of New Frontier is nothing less than to turn these students' lives around.

"These are kids who *can* do the work, but they *don't* do the work," says NEA member Jeff Koerten, who teaches science and math in the program. "Maybe they don't turn in assignments. They've been moved along with social advancement. Then they get to high school, and they don't have the habits to be successful.

During the planning for New Frontier, Millard South staff looked at what other school systems were doing for underachieving students. They found mostly programs for juniors and seniors—too late, they decided, to step into a failing student's life.

"We need to get a hold of kids before they drop out and disappear," says Koerten.

The teachers in the New Frontier program are using the multiple intelligences approach because, Koerten explains, student learning styles "just don't line up with the way most education is done."

But mostly, Koerten notes, the program monitors the kids.

"We keep a real close eye on them," he points out. "If the homework isn't handed in, we expect to see it the next day. If it's not, then you come in during lunch and do it."

Parents get progress reports every two weeks, and there's plenty of contact in between—more than 400 phone calls with parents last semester for the 40 New Frontier students.

"The parents are with us," reports Koerten. "Many of them have been kind of lost about what to do with their children."

Koerten, a 21-year teaching veteran, says New Frontier is harder but also more rewarding than the work he's done before.

"You're working with some kids who are defiant," he explains. "They are unwilling to want to do well. You work and work and work, and some kids will battle you every step of the way."

Some kids, Koerten admits, you never reach.

"But then you get kids who've been taking algebra and haven't gotten it for

Idea Exchange

'Novel' Life Skills

I've devised a method that incorporates "life skills" (responsibility, integrity, cooperation) into my curriculum and teaches students how they use these same skills in their own lives.

After reading a novel, students write essays describing how a character in a novel uses three life skills. In their summation, students have to think of a challenging situation they currently face and describe some life skills that could help them handle the situation.

I found that this shows students the true utility of life skills.

Rex Scott
Tucson, Arizona

Classroom Reporter

My students take turns being the classroom reporter.

Whenever something newsworthy takes place, a student may take a picture and write about the event on a "reporter sheet." When the film is developed, students place their photos and their reports in a scrapbook.

Toward the end of the school year, students may take the scrapbook home so their parents can see the pictures and read the news events. It's great to have a record of all the wonderful and exciting things that have taken place in the classroom throughout the year.

Jo Elliott
Ortonville, Minnesota

Keyboard Boxers

To encourage my high school keyboarding students to learn good touch keying and not to look at their fingers, I ask them to bring a cute pair of boxer shorts to class.

They put the computer keyboard through the elastic waistband and sit it on their desk. Then they put their hands through the legs and position them correctly on the keyboard. Off they go!

The students think it's cool, and it encourages good keying technique, since they can't see the board and really have to concentrate on their sense of touch.

Bruce Baker
Virginia Beach, Virginia

Works4Me
NEA's e-mail classroom tip of the week!

Have a great idea? You can pass along your tips to *NEA Today*'s more than 2.4 million readers in one of five ways:

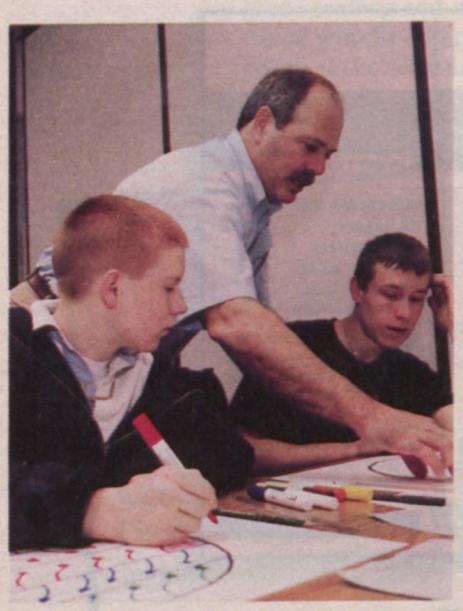
- By mail: *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036
- By phone: 202/822-7201
- By fax: 202/822-7206
- By E-mail: Ideas@neatoday.nea.org
- Through the Web: www.nea.org/neatoday

three years, and now they start making headway, and they start smiling," he says. "That's an awesome feeling."

The New Frontier team includes three classroom teachers, including Koerten, who integrate their instruction and align their expectations of the students. A behavioral interventionist, a paraprofessional, and support from a counselor and Millard High staff round out the team.

New Frontier is in its second year, after a year in development. It's been funded by a $250,000 state grant. Koerten is confident the school board will now pick it up, because board members have seen the results.

"Their learning style doesn't line up with the way most education is done."



The New Frontier students will go back into regular classes for their last two years at Millard South, but the school is creating a transition program for them called Next Frontier.

The *Omaha World-Herald* recently ran a series of critical articles, headlined "Lost in High School," about high school seniors who didn't connect with education. The school superintendent published a reply describing the public schools' efforts to reach these students.

New Frontier was first on his list.

"Most of the kids in the newspaper series were just the kind of kid we teach," said Koerten. "I think they would have been turned around if our program had been there when they were freshmen and sophomores." ✔

—Alain Jehlen

For more information, contact Jeff Koerten or Assistant Principal Kim Saum at Millard South High School, 14905 West Q St., Omaha, NE 68137 (jlkoerte@millard.esu3.k12.ne.us or ksaum@millard.esu3.k12.ne.us).

[DILEMMA]

How do you combat grade inflation?

Ted Pitts

I ask the students to "grade" themselves. I create a rubric for projects with descriptions and suggested points for each level of the rubric. Students turn in their self-evaluations with their projects.

At least half the students are very honest in their evaluations, and I may have to grade them higher than they grade themselves. Others, though, just give themselves a perfect score.

Since I made up the rubric and point system in advance, it's easier to grade objectively and not lower my standards once I start grading.

Barbara Loeding
Associate professor of special education
Lakeland, Florida

■ Perhaps it sounds simplistic, but I make out my rubric before I begin grading. Since I save stuff (sometimes it seems like everything) from year to year, I still have previous rubrics to go by even when I change an old test or project.

It's probably not fool-proof, but I have approximately the same grade distribution over the years, if not a greater number of lower grades.

Lee Berger
High school English and journalism teacher
Franklin, North Carolina

■ I make three to four versions of tests. The tests are written for children with different abilities and learning styles, yet each test contains questions that require critical thinking. This gives all students the opportunity to receive a fair grade if they have prepared, yet allows me to assign "top" grades only to those who have reached a higher level of learning.

Another method I use is to count spelling on all work. It doesn't count enough to prevent a student from obtaining a good grade on whatever concept the assignment is assessing. But it does allow those with a higher level of skills to receive higher grades.

All students are responsible for turning in assignments. So only those students who make every effort to complete their work receive top grades.

At the beginning of the year, I have both students and parents sign a paper indicating that they understand my grading policy. This doesn't always keep them from protesting later on, but it does serve as a reminder of the standards that were agreed upon.

Tammy Ratcliff
Sixth grade science/reading teacher
Huntington, West Virginia

■ I'm very clear to students on what they're expected to know. I do not curve tests. The *A* students will get an *A* on a difficult test as long as they know what the expectations are.

I give students who have scored below 70 percent an opportunity to raise their grade by retesting on the portions of the test that they did not master. But I allow them to earn only enough points to bring their grade up into the *C* range. That way, a student cannot get an *A* or a *B* by making test corrections or taking retakes.

Claudia Heinrich
High school math teacher
Livonia, Michigan

■ In my elementary school, and across our district at middle and high school levels, we use a continuum of skills based on chronological age levels, as well as the district-designed "Cornerstone Proficiencies."

Each of the "Big 4" benchmarks—reading, writing, number sense, and problem solving—includes performance-based focus points. Benchmarks are assessed at second, fifth, eighth, and 12th grades, with validations based on a body of evidence for each student.

The body of evidence includes an actual student performance piece (for example, a friendly letter at grade five), a building-secured assessment for each benchmark level, and copies of scores from state standards.

A district writing assessment is administered in second, fifth, eighth, and 11th grades. Scores are determined by a 4, 3, 2, 1 rubric score.

Now that we are not using percentages or letter grades, our "grades" are not the product of any teacher's subjectivity.

Barbara Iskra
Fifth grade teacher and instructional steering committee member
Aurora, Colorado

Got an Answer?

What do you do when you think parents have done a student's assignment?

Send your answer by regular mail, by fax to 202/822-7206, or by E-mail to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org. Please include your name, city, state, job title, and grade level, if applicable.

Published respondents will receive a new *NEA Today* mug!

Got a Dilemma?

Faced with a dilemma at work that you'd like other NEA members to address in this column? Send in your dilemma question to *NEA Today* by regular mail, by Fax to 202/822-7206, or by E-mail to dilemma2@neatoday.nea.org.

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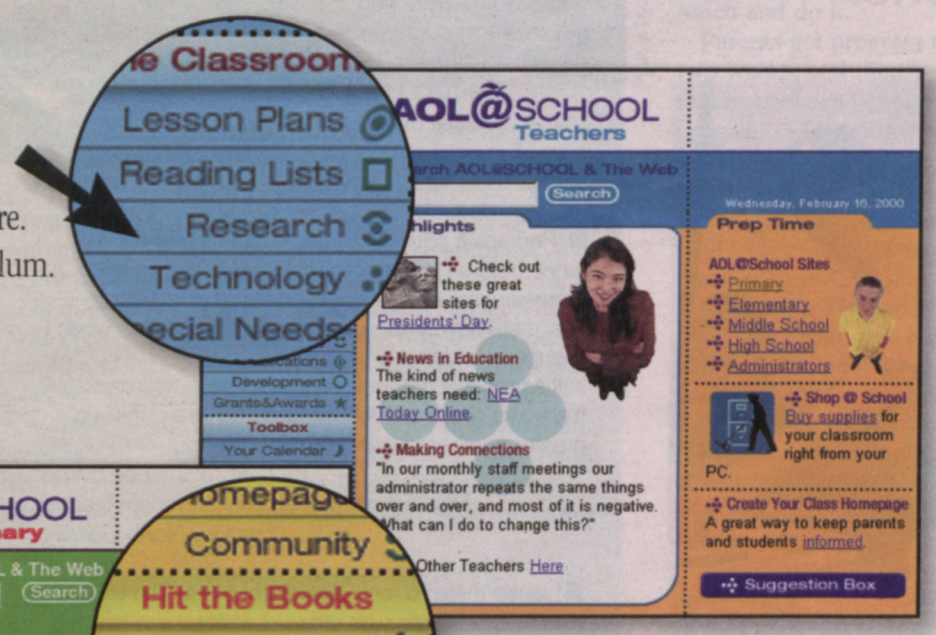

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READING

'We've Read All the Books!'

Two Delaware paraprofessionals document their considerable success with Accelerated Reader.

Photos by Gary Emeigh

Title I paraprofessionals Patty Carney (top) and Joy Ferguson won a grant that expanded the use of the Accelerated Reader program they favor.

It sounds like a fairy tale. Last year alone, the 400 students at Booker T. Washington Elementary in Dover, Delaware, read more than 20,000 books. Students have actually complained about having nothing to read—because "We've read all the books!"

Title I paraprofessionals Patty Carney and Joy Ferguson have conjured this love of books not with a magic potion, but with Accelerated Reader, a computer-based reading program that encourages reading through self-tests.

The program gives students "instant feedback," says Ferguson, a fourth grade reading and math paraprofessional who first implemented the program at the school. "And its reward system really got the children excited about reading."

With Accelerated Reader, a student reads a book or is read one. The student then logs onto an individual account, selects the appropriate title, and answers 10 multiple choice content questions. The test is then scored.

A failing grade prompts the student to read the book again and take a retest. A passing grade adds points to an account that can be later traded in for reading incentives.

Educators collect valuable information about each student from a printout that details the book read, its reading level, percentage of correct answers, and points assigned.

A cumulative report lists all books read and calculates an average reading level for the student. Educators can generate progress reports for parents to show the reading strengths and weaknesses of each child, indicate which areas need more help, and track each child's progress.

"At first, students would want to read the book real fast, and then they'd fail," says Carney, a second grade paraprofessional. "We tell them to take their time. Unless it's a test the teacher is using for a class grade, they are allowed to go back into the book and find the answer."

The standard program includes up to 1,000 titles and tests, and educators can easily write their own tests for any book used in any classroom.

Washington Elementary, a school where some 93 percent of the student body is economically disadvantaged, still needed more books to feed its ravenous readers. So Ferguson and Carney applied for a grant from the MBNA Education Foundation.

"We knew teachers wrote grants," recalls Carney. "But we had no idea that Title I paras could write grants."

Referencing a copy of a grant submitted by another teacher, the two met after school to craft their request.

They bolstered their proposal with a wealth of data derived from Accelerated Reader statistical reports.

"We were able to document reading scores that jumped one and two grade levels," says Ferguson.

Last year, MBNA awarded the paras a grant large enough to buy 1,275 books, computer equipment, and reading incentives for a district-wide Accelerated Reading competition.

Boosting the reading program "was something that both Patty and I believed in," says Ferguson. "It required a lot of work. But our school needed more resources, so we decided to go for it." ✔

— Michelle Y. Green

For more:

• Contact Patty Carney and Joy Ferguson at Booker T. Washington Elementary, 901 Forest St., Dover, DE 19904, 302/672-1900.

• For info on Accelerated Reader, contact Advantage Learning Systems, P.O. Box 8036, Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495; 888/656-2931. E-mail answers@advlearn.com or log on to www.acceleratedreader.com.

A Tip of the Cat's Hat in Thanks!
Thanks for the greatest Read Across America yet! Check out the photo highlights at our web site.
Tell us how we can help make next year's celebration even better. Fill out our *quick* web survey at:
www.nea.org/readacross
NEA's Read Across America

READING RESOURCES

● "America's Kindergartners"—a landmark national study on kindergartners, their classrooms, and their families—reports that most children enter kindergarten with beginning reading skills, and nearly all know numbers and shapes. Some key findings:

➤ 82 percent of kindergarten kids have print familiarity skills, such as knowing that print is read from left to right.

➤ 66 percent recognize letters.

➤ 94 percent know their numbers and basic shapes.

➤ 4 percent can add or subtract.

The study will continue to follow the same sample of children through the 5th grade, gathering data on their reading and math achievement, social skills, and school experiences.

One question the study will address is whether differences among children entering school persist or change over time.

For a copy of this report, just released by the National Center for Education Statistics, call 877/4ed-pubs. Or visit the Center's Web site at http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/ index.asp.

● Need help setting up a summer reading program? You'll find help in the America Reads Challenge Resource Kit, free from the U.S. Department of Education at www.ed. gov/america reads/resourcekit/.

● Check out the NEA reading Web page at www.nea.org/readingmatters. It offers classroom ideas, home activities, reading news, advice based on research, and resources for parents and teachers.

NEA Members Insurance Trust Plan

1998 Summary Annual Report

(Trust Plan Year Beginning September 1, 1998)

The following is the summary annual report for the NEA Members Insurance Trust Plan (Trust), Employer Identification Number 52-1126682, including information for NEA Life Insurance Program, NEA Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance Program, NEA DUES-TAB, and NEA MemberCare® Medicare Supplement Program for period beginning September 1, 1998, and ending August 31, 1999. The annual report has been filed with the Internal Revenue Service, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Basic NEA Members Insurance Trust Financial Information

The value of Trust assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Trust was **$103,775,102** as of August 31, 1999, compared to **$85,433,953** as of September 1, 1998. During the Trust year, the Trust experienced an increase in its net assets of **$18,341,149**. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of Trust assets; that is, the difference between the value of the Trust assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the Trust year, the Trust had total income of **$79,470,777**, including participant contributions of **$50,853,373**, realized gains of **$7,396,477** from the sale of assets, and earnings from investments of **$5,908,554**.

Trust expenses were **$61,129,628**. These expenses included benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries, administrative and other expenses.

Information For NEA Life Insurance Program

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA Life Insurance claims incurred under the terms of this program. The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 1998, and ending August 31, 1999, were **$35,482,804**.

Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 1999, the contributions made under such "experienced-rated" contract were **$35,482,804** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **$30,678,783**.

Information For NEA Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) Program

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA AD&D claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The total contributions for the Trust year beginning September 1, 1998, and ending August 31, 1999 were **$2,471,618**.

Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 1999, the contributions made under such "experienced-rated" contract were **$2,471,618** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **$1,937,035**.

Information For NEA Dues-Tab Program

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA DUES-TAB claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The total contributions for the Trust year beginning September 1, 1998 and ending August 31, 1999 were **$2,459,696**.

Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 1999, the contributions made were **$2,459,696** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **$2,140,272**. Benefits charged, less benefit claims paid, were **183,351** which is comprised of incurred but unreported claims and a pooled claim charge. Trust expenses, less benefit claims paid, were **$48,118** in premium taxes and **$142,530** in other expenses.

The NEA DUES-TAB program is self-supporting and paid by premiums from the NEA Members Insurance Trust funds rather than from Member contributions.

Information For NEA Membercare Medicare Supplement Program

This information will be distributed directly to Medicare Supplement Program participants.

Additional Information

As a participant, you have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof for a reasonable charge or you may inspect the Annual Report without charge at the office of NEA Members Insurance Trust, c/o NEA Member Benefits, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. You also have the right to receive from the Trust Administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the Trust and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the Trust and accompanying notes, or both. The Administrator will state the charge, if any, of the specific document you request so you can find out the cost before ordering.

Doomed Before Kindergarten?

A scientist rebuts the claim that a child's brainpower is determined by age three.

In recent years, the media—and marketers—have emphasized "brain-based research" to advance the notion that children's minds must be especially stimulated in the first three years or their future learning capacity is in peril. But have children's most critical learning years truly passed before they even start school? A new book says: No.

Are some kids doomed before kindergarten?

There's never been any evidence that experiences before kindergarten mold a person's brain for life, says John Bruer, author of the recently released *The Myth of the First Three Years*.

"There's no magic cutoff," says Bruer, who heads the James S. McDonnell Foundation in St. Louis, which funds research in neuroscience, developmental psychology, and education.

Early experiences and stimuli may benefit a child, but children who lack early intellectual stimulation can still do very well.

"Good teachers can have profound effects at any age," Bruer says, "from pre-school to university to the people you work for in adult life."

What about "critical periods" of learning?

A "critical period" is a window of opportunity, a limited time during which experiences have a permanent, irreversible effect. Bruer says research shows there are critical periods in a child's development, but only for a few very basic abilities.

These time-sensitive abilities include seeing, hearing, acquiring a first language, and possibly some areas of social and emotional development.

The stimulation that people need in these areas is present in any normal human environment, and there's no value in adding more, Bruer notes.

For example, in those rare cases where children have been *completely* unexposed to language in their early years, they were not able to learn later.

Clearly, small children do need people to talk to them. But there's no evidence that extra talk at an early age automatically leads to superior language skills as an adult.

In most areas of learning, the effects of deprivation are reversible. "It might take some effort," says Bruer, "but the child's life isn't forever ruined. Later experiences can have a huge effect."

"Everybody's favorite example of critical periods is Henry Kissinger," Bruer adds. "He arrived in the United States around age 12 and speaks English with a German accent. His brother, two years younger, has no accent."

Henry Kissinger may have missed the critical period for learning to speak English without an accent, but his English grammar and vocabulary are rich and learned.

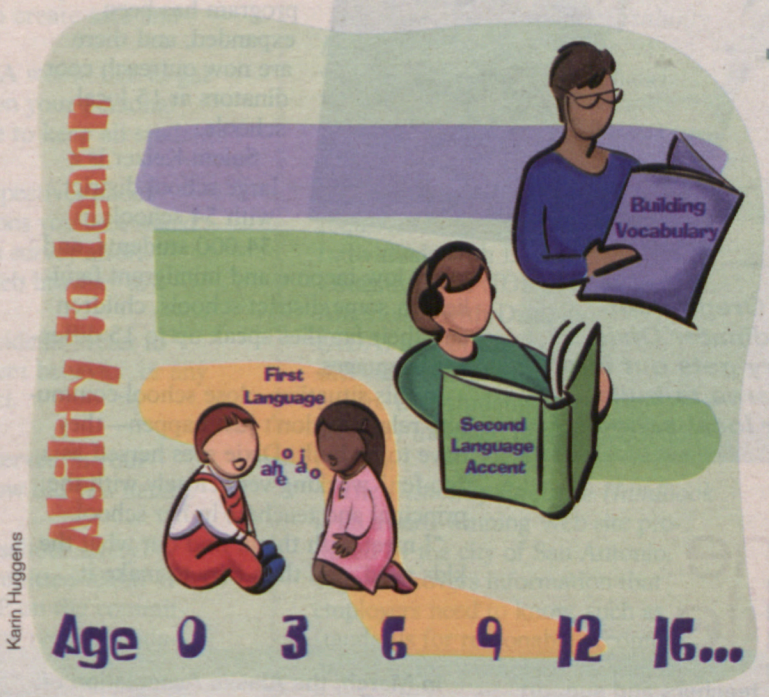
Doesn't brain research tell us pre-school is all-important?

No. There *is* evidence—from outside of brain research—that young children from disadvantaged backgrounds can benefit from good, early school-like experiences: These students do better in school afterward.

"But this is not a 'critical period' phenomenon," says Bruer. "We all benefit from experiences throughout our lifetimes."

Haven't studies shown that nerve dendrites proliferate between birth and three years?

Dendrites, which form connections among nerve cells, do grow rapidly during the first few years. But the proliferation of dendrites, Bruer notes, seems to be controlled by genes—dendrites proliferate regardless of whether a child is in a rich environment.



Karin Huggens

It's Never Too Late To Learn

Language skills can be continually acquired and developed well beyond the early childhood years. The exception: Those rare children who aren't exposed to language at all in their early years can't catch up.

What's more, Bruer adds, skills seem to develop later, when excess dendrites are pruned. It's the pruning, not the growth, that's affected by environment.

What about research showing that rats raised in enriched environments are smarter?

"Putting rats in an enriched environment has good effects no matter what their age," reports Bruer, citing work by Bill Greenough at the University of Illinois. "Greenough's work shows we can and should think about providing experiences at any age."

What should educators know about current brain research?

Caveat emptor—be a wary and wise consumer whenever the popular press reports on the "latest brain research."

"I hope educators gain some understanding of what science does and doesn't say," Bruer muses. "They need to critically appraise the claims they read about brain-based research."

Research in developmental and cognitive psychology, says Bruer, can help teachers do their work better.

For example, research shows children don't come to class with mental blank slates. Children may come with misconceptions that are hard to change. So, to help students learn, teachers need to start by finding out what students already know, or think they know, about the subject at hand.

But brain-based research, at least where it stands now, won't offer any fact-based insights.

"One real danger of over-emphasizing the early years is that this can cause parents and teachers to give up," says Bruer. "A teacher may say, 'Development is done by age three. There's nothing I can do.'"

Says Bruer: "That's not true." ✔

For more, check out *The Myth of the First Three Years* (Free Press, $17.50 from Amazon.com). You can order it easily on the *NEA Today* Web site. Go to www.nea.org/neatoday/0005/fyi.html.

TEAMWORK

Reaching Out, Sharing the Load

With schools part of every community, school employees need to make an effort to get to know parents, community, and business leaders. In Salem, Oregon, there's a school outreach coordinator on the job to do just that.

There's always something going on at Keizer (Oregon) Elementary School. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, fifth graders run the school's used book store, with the help of parent volunteers. Wednesday mornings, parents help students with the school bank. Throughout the week, volunteer "Reading Buddies," many of them retirees, read to students one-on-one as part of an early intervention program for low readers.

Then there are family activities such as Family Science Day and Hispanic Parent night. Dozens of area businesses, some of them small, some of them part of national corporations, work with the school to help meet student needs for everything from dental and vision care to clothing and shoes.

At the center of all this activity, working to bring the resources of the community together, is Keizer Elementary Community Outreach Coordinator Dixie Montgomery.

Montgomery started out as an outreach coordinator 10 years ago, when the position was first established in nine high-need elementary schools. Since then the program has been expanded, and there are now outreach coordinators at 15 local schools.

Salem-Keizer is a large school district, with 54 schools, 34,000 students, and many low-income and immigrant families. In some district schools, children and their families speak up to 15 different languages.

In this situation, close school-community relations don't just happen—they have to be built. Dixie sees herself as a "go-fer," working very closely with the principal and teachers in her school.

"I meet with them, find out what the kids need, and then I try to make it happen," she explains.

Dixie's local NEA affiliate, the Salem-Keizer Association of Classified Employees (SKACE), is a big part of Salem-Keizer's school-community partnership. Once again this year, SKACE put together a huge Read Across America day, joining political and business leaders, and hundreds of students, at the state capitol and area malls.

"More parents are working now, and it's harder for them to be involved," notes Montgomery. "I wish every school could afford a community school outreach position. Someone has to be looking for resources all the time." ✔

Michael Halle

Oregon outreach coordinator Dixie Montgomery gets out into the Salem area to build support for local schools.

Looking for Fairness

Dixie Montgomery's community outreach coordinator position is just one of the 128 job classifications held by the 1,600 employees in the Salem-Keizer school district.

"People don't think of jobs like community coordinator when they think of ESP," says SKACE President Janet McIntire.

SKACE recently sought NEA help on overhauling its unwieldy job classification system. Working with NEA staffer Linda James, SKACE and the school district embarked on a comprehensive study.

So far, 19 job classifications have been upgraded, and a permanent joint labor-management job reclassification committee is now in place to review requests for job upgrades.

For more information, contact Linda James at NEA, 1201 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036, 202/822-7725, ljames@nea.org.

Going the Extra Mile

In New Jersey, teachers and support staff are working together to help high schoolers stay safe.

James McCulley, a Washington Township high school maintenance worker, and **Steve Cordner,** a driver ed teacher, teamed up this past February to teach students how to get on the right track to driving safely.

The two gave a fascinating presentation that addressed the dangers of "street racing" and drag racing. Students even had an opportunity to check out "real" racecars, which McCulley works on in his spare time.

In March, the Alaska Association of Community Educators honored six custodial staff members who work at Soldonta Middle School for 25 years of community service activity.

Assistant Superintendent Todd Syverson told **Connie Todd**, **Lance Roberts**, **Jack McGarry**, **Martin Galloway**, **Greg Reser**, **and John Gordon**, "Thanks to your efforts, for 20-plus years, Soldotna Community Schools have thrived,"

One North Carolina school is becoming a much brighter place, by the stroke of **James Peck's** paintbrush.

Peck, a custodian at Sedge Garden Elementary School, holds two jobs. In his spare time at night and on weekends, he enjoys painting murals of outer space, jungles, and school.

"If I could, I'd paint 365 days a year," says Peck, whose interest in art started in sixth grade.

Peck has painted some 25 murals.

"He's extremely talented," says Principal P. Gaye Weatherman, "and he's great at integrating his artwork with the standard course of study."

TEAM PLAYER

Modeler of Many Roles

Name: David Gibbs

Job title: Custodian/aide, Fort Greely Elementary/Middle School, Delta Junction, Alaska

School experience: After a 22-year Army career, Gibbs began work as a special education aide in 1981, a position he held for 10 years.

NEA local affiliate: Delta/Greely ESP Association.

Association positions: I've been a member of our local bargaining team, building rep, and, for six years, a member of the local's Executive Board.

I am a member of the Human and Civil Rights Committee, a five-time representative at our local Delegate Assembly, and a statewide representative at our Representative Assembly.

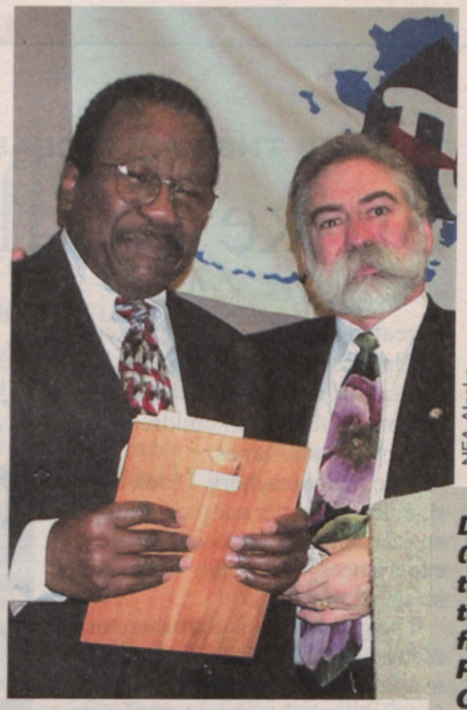
I've worked with my fellow colleagues to bargain three of our four contracts. I'm also a member of our employee rights committee.

In the community: I've been involved volunteering my time with youth for most of my life. I am currently on the board of directors with our local Youth Court.

I became involved in Youth Court after seeing it in action in Anchorage. I decided to help bring it to my community. The program is important because it allows students to be lawyers and judges of their peers who are first- time offenders.

As an 11-year member of the Kiwanis Club, I've twice served as president, and I'm now the chairman of the Youth Committee. In this position, I support the Key Club at our local high school and help with community events. I also work with a retired teacher, who is a member of Kiwanis, to coordinate a scholarship for eighth grade students.

Why I do it: We know that the youth are going to be in charge of our world someday.



NEA-Alaska

David Gibbs (left) receives the 1999 ESP of the Year Award from NEA-Alaska President John Cyr.

To be with them and help them succeed is rewarding. It's great to work with students because they are open to the information you have to pass on to them. It gives you a lift to talk to kids and to make a difference in their lives.

Honor: David Gibbs was named Alaska's 1999 ESP of the year. ✔

ESP and School Safety: What's Your Role?

NEA is now developing an information piece on the role of support staff in helping to create safe and orderly schools.

If you are a support staff employee, NEA would like to get your input and recommendations, based on your personal experiences, on the best steps we can take to keep all students safe and secure.

Interested in sharing your ideas and perspectives about school safety? Here are some of the questions you'll be asked to answer if you'd like to participate in this survey effort.

To finish the survey, please point your Web browser to **www.nea.org/esp/survey/.**

In the questions below, school safety "incidents" refer to instances of fighting, teasing, bullying, violent behavior, or any other violation of a school's code of conduct.

- What kinds of incidents have you observed in your school? If any, did you intervene? If so, how did you handle the situation?
- What are your major concerns about school safety? Does your school have a school safety committee/team? If so, have you served on it, or are there any ESP on the committee/team? Has the committee developed any recommendations? If so, tell us about them.
- Please give us any tips, suggestions, or advice, based on your experience, for handling violence, fights, harassment, weapons, discipline.
- Please make sure you indicate your position within the school system. There are nine job categories.

If you have other information about school safety efforts at your school that might be helpful for this survey effort—including copies of products and projects—please send this information along to the NEA Human and Civil Rights program unit at National Education Association, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Room 613, Washington, DC, 20036.

Please send your material to the attention of Carmen Lopez. ✔

RESOURCES

Tips on Disability Etiquette

"People with disabilities are not conditions or diseases. They are individual human beings. For example, a person is not an epileptic but rather a person who has epilepsy."

This is how the on-line *Disability Etiquette Handbook* begins, at www.ci.sat.tx.us/planning/handbook/.

With the mainstreaming of special needs children, all school employees need to be aware of both the legal requirements of laws such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and of the social and conversational rules of etiquette that help ensure that students with disabilities are fully included in the school community.

The *Disability Etiquette Handbook* is an award-winning Web site produced by the city of San Antonio, Texas. It covers information that employers need to know, such as standards for reasonable accommodation in the workplace, as well as conversational etiquette and other material that everyone should understand.

Wisconsin Academy Expands

With the introduction of a new Level II Certificate, the Wisconsin Education Association Council has expanded the opportunities it offers ESP through the WEAC Professional Development Academy.

The five-year-old ESP Certificate Program gives support staff job-related training opportunities leading to a certificate that recognizes their accomplishment.

In some cases, employers provide financial incentives for employees to pursue the certificate. The incentives may come in the form of a salary bonus, salary increase, or payment of tuition for classes.

More than 4,000 ESPs are now working towards a certificate, with about 25 enrolled in the Level II program.

The Academy is also helping other states create their own Association-run support staff certification programs.

For more information, contact Debra Berndt at WEAC, P.O. Box 8003, Madison, WI 53708, phone 800/362-8034 ext. 294, E-mail BerndtD@weac.org.

School Bus Seatbelts

School Transportation News Online (www.stnonline.com) reports that the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety is opposed to the use of two-point lap belts in school buses.

Notes the group's 1999 status report: "Although they [lap belts] can reduce the risk of ejection, they can also increase head injury potential in frontal crashes... If belts are to be mandated, they should be designs that include upper torso restraints."

Five states currently require the use of seat belts on school buses.

STN Online describes itself as a "portal to the world of school transportation."

TIPS FOR THE WIRED CLASSROOM

Strike Up the Bandwidth

My favorite Web site

I've been using www.myschoolhouse.com to supplement my math program. The site has self-paced math lessons where kids can work at their own level, and it keeps track of the lessons that they complete successfully.

Chris Sanderfoot
Second grade teacher
New London, Wisconsin

I created BestChildrensMusic.com to help classroom teachers, music specialists, and parents locate the cream-of-the-crop in children's music CDs and tapes.

Like many teachers, I look outside our district's adopted texts for enrichment and cross-curricular experiences—especially for music integration.

The good news is that there are many wonderful music resources available in CD and cassette tape formats by independent producers and major record labels. But because of the sheer number of recordings available, teachers need help in finding appropriate and meaningful projects.

That's where BestChildrens Music.com comes in. The site offers expert recommendations, music clips, and song lyrics to preview. In the Lil' Cow Bookstall, you'll find storybook suggestions—all revolving around music.

Fred Koch
Music specialist
Lake Forest, Illinois
fkoch@lfelem.lfc.edu

Netscape: Best Childrens Music.com: Your Source for Quality Children's Music!
Best Childrens Music.com
Welcome to Best Childrens Music.com
Music for Kid's Ears, Hearts and Minds
Our Purpose
Our Promise
BOOKMARK US NOW
AWARDS

You'll find an archive of educator-written children's music reviews—and you can even order the recommendations online—at BestChildrensMusic.com.

I Love Paris in the Springtime

Want a quick and easy way to involve your primary students with the Internet?

My first graders love the Madeline books. After many readings of the books and activities with the Madeline CD-ROMs, I bookmark the weather for our town and for Paris.

Every day a different child brings up these sites. Every child picks up a scrap sheet of paper and sets up the subtraction problem to find out the difference in temperature between the two cities.

Pattie Meyer
First grade teacher
Powhatan Point, Ohio
pat227@1st.net

My Baby Wrote Me a Letter

This Internet activity goes along with a unit on *Cyrano de Bergerac*. It's nice to try to time the unit to coincide with Valentine's Day.

After reading and discussing the play, students go to our computer lab and log on to www.nando.net/toys/cyrano.html. This is the "Cyrano Server," and, with its help, students can compose love letters, Cyrano style, and practice their parts of speech at the same time!

It's easy. Just click on "Love Letter." Under "What style of letter?" click on poetic. Then fill in the blanks with the part of speech requested.

Students who do not have a significant other can send you a card. I have a collection of quite amusing letters!

This is a great way for students to identify with poor Christian, who has to have Cyrano help him write beautiful poetic letters to the lovely Roxanne.

Carol Eanes
High school English teacher
Pilot Mountain, North Carolina
eanes16@hotmail.com

Charting IEP Progress

I use Microsoft PowerPoint during IEP meetings to present a nice visual agenda and thumbnail sketch of the student. It's very effective to include photos and movie clips of the child performing the skills addressed in the IEP.

Without exception, parents always leave my IEP meetings with the comfort level that we as teachers strive for in communicating a student's progress in our classrooms.

Carl Treutle
Special education teacher
Vista, California
Emil@iexprs.com

Digital Seating Charts

Because of seeing many students during the week, changing seating arrangements each marking period, and my occasional absence from class for conferences and inservice training, I've started creating seating charts using digital photography.

With the school's digital camera, I take a picture of each student in each of my 12 classes. I created a seating chart template with photo-editing and page layout software in Microsoft Publisher.

The kids' pictures are cropped, reduced, and then inserted into the appropriate spot on the template. Seating charts are then printed. Every time I change the seating arrangement, I simply click and drag the picture to the new spot and print a new copy.

It takes some time at first, but once you have the pictures in the computer, rearranging is easy.

Substitute teachers love the chart, it helps me learn names and do evaluations—and taking attendance is quick and accurate.

Donald Fox
High school science teacher
Dansville, NY
DonF@wayland-cohocton.k12.ny.us

TALK TO US:

Have a nifty classroom tip or lesson plan that uses technology? E-mail a description (under 200 words, please!) to wiredclassroom@list.nea.org.

Is there a Web site, CD-ROM, or piece of software you can't live without? E-mail your favorites—and why you love them—to myfavoritetech@list.nea.org.

Or send your responses by regular mail to *NEA Today*, or by Fax to 202/822-7206, or through the Web at www.nea.org/cet.

Those published here will receive a sparkling *NEA Today* mug!

Tech Tools

- **Decisions, Decisions Online (www.teachtsp2.com/ddonline/) is an award-winning site and an excellent teacher resource. Students get practice role-playing legislators who are faced with crucial decisions.**
- **Visit Dave's ESL Café (www.eslcafe.com), where English is fun! The site features many student and teacher forums and a hint-of-the day section.**
- **The Doucette Index (www.educ.ucalgary.ca/litindex/) is a large database of Web sites and books that contain helpful suggestions that literature teachers can use in the classroom.**
- **At Interactivetest.com you can create a multiple-choice test to link to your own Web site or an online exam that will be automatically corrected, with the results stored in a database that only you can access.**

Crossing the Digital Divide

A West Virginia teacher uses her knack for grant writing to bring world-class technology to her rural school. The result: Significant gains in student achievement.

Photos by Craig Cunningham

Who:
Brenda Bleigh, Title 1 teacher (grades 1-4), Burnsville Elementary School, Burnsville, West Virginia

E-mail:
bbleigh@access.k12.wv.us

Inspiration:
It's easy to understand Brenda Bleigh's determination to bring technology to her school. A coal miner's daughter and the first of eight children to go to college, she was raised in the same rural and poor Burnsville area where she now teaches.

"I was hoping to be an example for what kids can do with limited resources at home," she explains. "If the school could provide technology, at least students would be able to compete."

With support from her first Internet workshop instructor, Bleigh started applying for small grants and worked her way up—to an incredible $500,000 in grants for her school of 170 students.

Now every classroom has its own modern workstation with Internet access. All students have access to a basic skills computer lab established through a statewide initiative, and Bleigh also secured a grant to fund a second, 15-station lab, which is used for thematic units.

And thanks to Bleigh's 1998 Christa McAuliffe Fellowship award, there's a DISCOVER Science Center in her Title 1 resource room. The center includes a stereo microscope, SMART board, and projector.

Lesson:
According to a recent study of student achievement in West Virginia's Basic Skills/Computer Education Program, Bleigh points out, technology has led directly to significant gains in math, reading, and language arts skills.

Bleigh has seen gains of her own. Teaching in a rural area can be isolating, but, with Internet access, she can go and find ideas, lesson plans, and pictures.

"Every time I sit down at the computer," she says, "there's something new."

With her McAuliffe Fellowship, Bleigh developed Primarily Science, a Web site for elementary teachers, with links to lesson plans—and science recipes for neat stuff like cookie bar coal and edible rocks.

Bleigh helps colleagues get up to speed through summer technology workshops, all funded by one of the grants she wrote.

Besides spending daily time in the computer lab, Bleigh notes, most teachers are beginning to incorporate technology in their classrooms.

"Our thematic units classes integrate technology, but not every day," Bleigh says. "We hope to do more every year.

"We're just at the beginning," she adds. "We've got this huge amount of equipment and software, but there has to be slow implementation, and it has to fit within our curriculum."

Built in 1916, Burnsville Elementary has asbestos, a leaky foundation, no air conditioning—and state-of-the-art technology, thanks to teacher Brenda Bleigh (upper left).

Click:
Grant writing is time consuming, but worth the effort to help rural students cross the digital divide.

"We can't educate today's students with yesterday's technology," as Bleigh puts it, "and expect tomorrow's successes." ✔

Check out the Primarily Science Web site at www.rtol.net/bbleigh/index. Visit Burnsville Elementary School at www.wvonline.com/burnsville.

Bytes for Beginners

I'm starting to work with my students as they build pages for our school's Web site. But I'm confused by one thing—graphics! What's the difference between GIF and JPG?

You need a clear picture of the difference between the two graphic formats if you want to build attractive, fast-loading Web pages.

Both GIF (Graphics Interchange Format) and JPG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) are compressed graphic formats. They use different algorithms to shrink the size of the original graphic file.

GIF is referred to as a "lossless" compression format because when it shrinks a graphic, it remembers what data it removed from the original graphic file and adds it back whenever the file is redisplayed.

JPG (pronounced "jay-peg") is "lossy," meaning that the decompressed image isn't quite the same as the one you started with. JPG is capable of achieving much greater compression than is possible with GIF.

JPG is superior to GIF for storing full-color or gray-scale images of "realistic" scenes—scanned photographs, continuous-tone artwork, etc. Any smooth variation in color, such as occurs in highlighted or shaded areas, will be represented more faithfully and in less space by JPG than by GIF.

GIF does significantly better on images with only a few distinct colors, such as line drawings and simple cartoons.

Large areas of an image that are all exactly the same color are compressed efficiently by GIF. JPG can't squeeze such data without introducing visible defects.

My favorite Software

I can't live without my ThinkWave Educator gradebook software. Download it for free or ask for free CD-ROMs for each teacher in your school by going to www.ThinkWave.com.

Alicia Vilas
Elementary science teacher
South River, New Jersey

Arty Animals in Ice

Snow sculpture is popular among residents of wintry areas, but one NEA member has taken the art of snow sculpture to new heights, winning a best of show award in the process.

Bill Harden

Ellen McKinney (right), a first grade teacher, lives in McCall, a small town in western Idaho. Every winter, for over 60 years, McCall residents have held a winter carnival.

The centerpiece of the carnival: an ice sculpture contest.

McKinney has been a regular contestant in this competition, and this year, after seven tries, McKinney finally won first place—for an 8-foot-high by 14-foot-long sculpture based on Maurice Sendak's book *Where the Wild Things Are.*

This was no ordinary snow character. McKinney and her helper, Roxanne Hills, brought Sendak's characters vividly to life—in ice.

"It took about 150 hours to finish the sculpture," explains McKinney. "Most of the time was spent getting the figures in rough shape. Then we had to carefully mold the fine detail."

Unlike most ice sculptures, adds McKinney, "ours was built from the ground up, one handful of ice at a time." ✔

Roxanne Hill

History under Cover

David Humber

More than a graveyard emerged from the underbrush outside Chattanooga. The past came alive.

Although a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, music teacher **LaFrederick Thirkhill** had never heard of Pleasant Gardens, a 22-acre cemetery only three or four miles from his home.

Then, two years ago, Thirkhill read about the 1906 lynching of a Black man named Ed Johnson by a mob of white vigilantes. He became intrigued by that tragic incident and decided to visit Johnson's gravesite in Pleasant Gardens.

What Thirkhill found was shocking: acres of headstones, many of them overturned, lying on sunken graves covered with weeds and thorny vines.

"Under all the weeds and brush, I could see all of the beauty and history," says Thirkhill. "It was a feeling that I can't explain."

Since then, Thirkhill has started a not-for-profit organization called Friends of Pleasant Gardens. The group has raised money to restore the site and conducted volunteer cleanups every other Saturday. Thirkhill estimates that close to 1,000 volunteers have taken part in the restoration project.

"It's not just a cleanup," he notes. "It's deeper than that. It's a way for people to connect with their past."

Adds the music teacher: "Young and old, Black and white, are working hand-in-hand to restore the cemetery. In a way, it's a form of racial reconciliation." ✔

Murder, She Wrote

Sterlinghouse

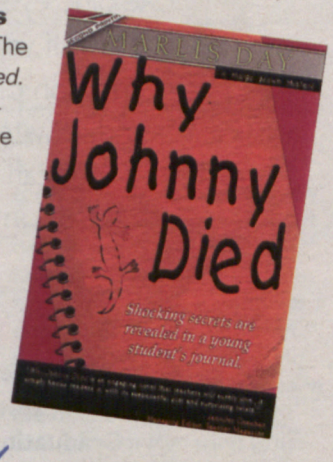
After 27 years of assigning journal writing to her students, middle school language arts teacher **Marlis Day** has picked up the pen to fill her own pages. The result? A well-received first novel, *Why Johnny Died.*

Day, who teaches in southern Indiana, has always loved writing. "Everyone has a story inside," says Day. "If you don't write that story, it will never be told."

And *Why Johnny Died* is certainly a story to tell. The novel incorporates the true-life experiences of Day and her students. When Johnny, who symbolizes neglected and abused children, dies, his teacher Margo Brown suspects foul play.

"A child's death seems so pointless and unfair," says Day. "It's our job to look after the Johnnies of this world."

Day never expected her message to affect readers from Maine to California, as it has. But success as a novelist isn't going to derail her teaching career. For Day, teaching is a family legacy: Her father, four siblings, and husband all teach. ✔



Music to His Ears

Come this July 4, Montana music teacher **Craig Naylor's** Symphony #2 will ring across the rolling farmlands of Osceola, Wisconsin.

Naylor is one of just 50 composers, chosen from over 900 applicants across the country, to have his symphonic work accepted for the Continental Harmony Project.

On July 4, towns in all 50 states will premiere works by Naylor and the 49 other composers to celebrate America's community heritage.

But Naylor, an elementary and high school music instructor, isn't resting on his laurels. In the works is a piece commissioned by a consortium of university and high school wind ensembles that includes UCLA and the University of Georgia.

In all, Naylor has about 60 compositions in his portfolio, everything from elementary band and choir pieces to film scores.

"One minute of music for orchestra equals about 20 hours of notation work on the computer," notes Naylor.

Naylor often gets up at 5 a.m. to fit in a couple of hours composing before school. After a full day teaching public school, he's off to more teaching at the local junior college.

Naylor says he enjoys the challenge of teaching at both the elementary and college levels.

"It satisfies," he explains, "different parts of my love for teaching." ✔

Robin Loznak

Celebs Show History Matters

When **Tom Jordan's** high school history class polled celebrities to find what historical figure they would like to have met, they got some amazing answers. Tom Hanks chose Jacques Cousteau. Rosie O'Donnell picked Rosa Parks. And the Beastie Boys joined Jesse Jackson and Dan Castellaneta—the voice behind Homer Simpson—in choosing Gandhi.

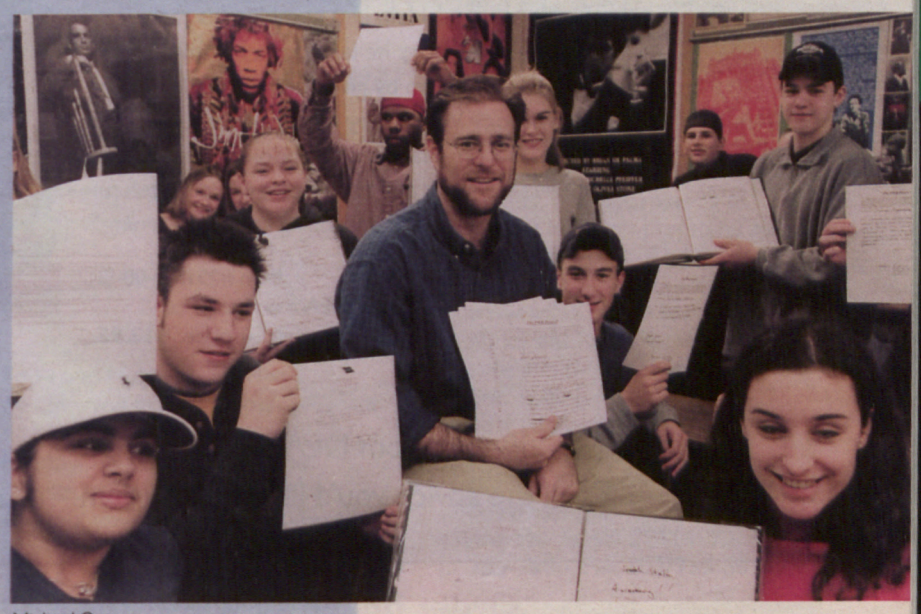
Jordan, who teaches U.S. history at Haverhill High School in western Massachusetts, began his "People We Respect" project four years ago as a way of showing that history matters and that "it isn't boring after all."

"History is not something that happens 45 minutes a day," says Jordan. "The letter-writing project gives students a tangible piece of information, something they can research later on."

Each year, Jordan's students pose a question and identify a list of people to contact. This school year, about 300 letters were mailed.

"Not everyone that students wrote to was a celebrity," stresses Jordan. "The concept is that you need to respect the person, and so we also wrote to people like the minister who ran the local shelter for battered women."

Nearly 200 responses were received this year. Many were reported in the March issue of *American Heritage* and also in *USA Today.* ✔



Michael Quan

Is there a new teacher in the family?

Like blue eyes and baldness, teaching runs in families. If you have a niece or nephew—or even a son or daughter—who'll be graduating this spring and starting a brand-new teaching career in the fall, consider a graduation gift that only a fellow educator can give. The NEA Professional Library has books to help all the graduates on your list get off to a great start.

Your daughter will be heading up her own classroom in a few months. Give her a leg up with our best-selling **Graduation Gift Pack**, featuring three great handbooks for teaching rookies.

Countdown to the First Day of School lays out a step-by-step checklist that'll have her poised and ready to succeed the day the school doors open.

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Bright Ideas: A Pocket Mentor for Beginning Teachers provides the sort of usable advice that every teacher needs and few teachers get.

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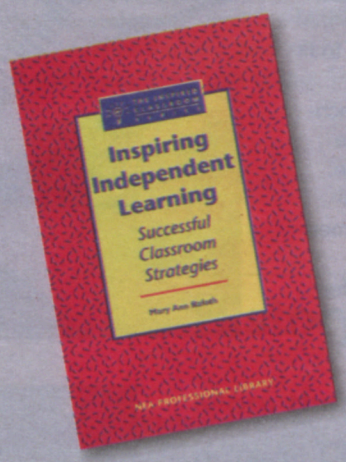
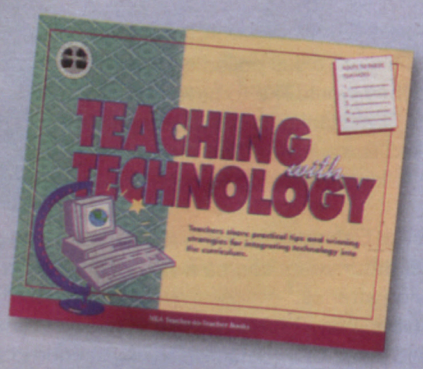


Your niece is going to have her hands full in a bursting-at-the-seams school. As much as you want to tell her she can't do it all, she's going to think she must. Help her feel less overwhelmed by giving her ***Inspiring Independent Learning***, full of tested techniques for helping students take responsibility for their own learning.

Item #2954-2-00-D
Special NEA member price: **$10.95**
Regular price: **$12.95**

Your nephew was born with a mouse in his hand. Help him combine his technical savvy with the theory he learned in his teacher ed program by giving him ***Teaching with Technology***. Written by classroom teachers for classroom teachers, this book offers proven strategies for integrating technology in curriculum and enhancing student learning.

Item #2915-1-00-D
Special NEA member price: **$9.95**
Regular price: **$12.95**



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Shipping & handling will be added to all orders

When Kids Show Up Hungry

Students should hunger for knowledge, not food. Yet millions of American kids are going hungry. In Oregon's St. Helen's School District, one child biked seven miles daily to get to a summer program with free meals. The NEA Health Information Network's Rena Large asked the Food Research and Action Center for tips for educators who need to feed both student stomachs and minds.

How many children are going hungry?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has established that the number of children from "food insecure"—that is, hungry—households rose from 10.36 million in 1997 to 12.37 million in 1998.

How does hunger affect learning?

Hungry students can't learn. Hunger is linked to lower test scores, behavioral problems, tardiness, and absenteeism. Many students who complain of stomachaches and headaches are actually experiencing symptoms of hunger.

Everyone is talking about improving student achievement. Research demonstrates that ensuring that schoolchildren are well-fed is an important first step toward that goal.

Miriam deRosier

What resources can schools tap?

Tens of millions of children participate in some federal child nutrition program. But millions of other children who are in need aren't being reached.

What's the most heavily used nutrition program?

The National School Lunch Program serves more than 26 million meals a day, in 95 percent of the nation's public schools. Without it, many students would have absolutely nothing to eat during the day.

The school meal applications that schools collect determine the rate at which schools are reimbursed. Meals are "free" for students whose household income is below 130 percent of the poverty line and "reduced-price" for students whose household income is between 130 and 185 percent.

The "paid rate" applies to students whose family income is higher or who don't turn in an application.

The meal applications are important because, besides providing meals, they're often used to determine Title I funding and to link students to health insurance and other services.

The Department of Agriculture is developing a Healthy School Environment Action Kit with pointers for improving the school lunch environment. Two tips: Ensure students have enough time to eat a good lunch and schedule a meal period that's not too early or late.

How does the School Breakfast effort work?

The School Breakfast Program offers students fuel to start the day right. Unfortunately, during the 1998-99 school year, only 74 percent of schools in the National School Lunch program also participated in the breakfast program.

Translation: Over 24,000 schools offer lunch, but not breakfast.

Even in schools that do participate, only two-fifths as many low-income students eat breakfast as eat lunch. Some students skip the breakfast because they don't want to be labeled "poor." One way to counter this stigma is to offer all children in a school a free breakfast.

Schools with a high proportion of low-income kids can serve universal free school breakfast—and lunch—using federal paperwork-saving mechanisms called Provisions II and III.

Is help available for after-school?

Schools can use federal funds from the National School Lunch Program to feed students in after-school and youth development programs. A school can get snack funds even if its after-school is run by a nonprofit.

Schools can also use the Child and Adult Care Food Program to feed students 12 and under in after-school programs.

What about summers?

The Summer Food Service Program can serve children up to two meals a day. Participating sites don't have to be located in a school, as long as 50 percent of the children in the area or program qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.

HEALTH RESOURCES

- **The Food Research and Action Center is a leading national organization working to improve public policies to eradicate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. Visit its Web site (www.frac.org) for examples of model nutrition programs in schools and profiles of hunger and nutrition programs in your state. For more, contact Food Research and Action Center, 1875 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 540, Washington, DC 20009. 202/986-2200; Fax 202/986-2525.**

- **For information on federally funded nutrition programs, visit the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service Web site at www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/. The child nutrition programs provide healthy, nutritious meals and snacks to the nation's children. Contact your local school officials or your state agency to find out if your school participates in the USDA school meals programs.**

NEA·HIN

From the **NEA Health Information Network**

Violence Prevention

***Ten Talks Parents Must Have With Their Children About Violence* gives parents the tools they need to effectively talk with their children about dangers they may face. Dominic Cappello outlines a series of easy-to-manage and engaging talks on subjects that range from defining violence and mixed messages in the media to school safety. $12.95 from Hyperion Press. Order on the Web at www.tentalks. com and at local or online bookstores.**

Medical Research

Advances in medicine and science are developed through research. New treatments must prove to be safe and effective in scientific studies with a certain number of patients before they can be made widely available. If you're interested in participating in a clinical trial, visit the NEA Health Information Network Web site at www.neahin.org/whatsnew.html for information on clinical trials and new studies, including the Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene (STAR).

Strong Women

Osteoporosis is a disease that gradually weakens bones and can lead to painful and debilitating fractures. Twenty-eight million Americans are at risk of developing the disease, 80 percent of them women. Visit the NEA Health Information Network Web at www.neahin.org/whatsnew.html for more information on the Strong Women Coalition and osteoporosis prevention, detection, and treatment.

School Nutrition

The American School Food Service Association has been advancing the availability, quality, and acceptance of school nutrition programs as an integral part of education since 1946. Visit the Web at www.asfsa.org to learn more about nutritious meals in schools, the science of nutrition, eating disorders, and how you can teach students about nutrition. For more, contact the association at 700 S. Washington St., Suite 300, Alexandria, VA 22314, 703/739-3900, Fax 703/739-3915.

Your Dues Dollars

A Report from NEA Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Van Roekel

As NEA secretary-treasurer, I am pleased to report to you figures excerpted from NEA's audited statements for the fiscal and membership year ended August 31, 1999. Once again NEA experienced a positive year in 1998-99!

Not only did we increase membership by adding 65,322 new members to our organization, but we also added $909,196 to our total net assets as a result of net revenues exceeding expenses. This increase of new membership adds strength to our already fiscally sound organization and enables us to build confidence in public education and to advocate for our member's needs. Each of you should be proud of your contribution in making the NEA strong and responsive to the students we serve and the people who spend their lives in public education.

The auditor's opinion letter stated that their work was performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. It was a 'clean opinion' issued without any qualifying comments. An unqualified opinion is the best kind of opinion letter to receive.

The Statements of Financial Position presented the Association's assets, liabilities and net assets as of August 31, 1999. One important indicator of an organization's financial strength is the net assets (the difference between total assets and total liabilities). Net assets should be a positive balance and sufficient not only to stabilize an organization in troubled times, but also to serve as a source of funds for special projects, future growth, and other fiscal demands as deemed appropriate. NEA's combined net asset balance is over $47.5 million, a level at which we can take both pride and comfort. In addition, NEA has continuously demonstrated a positive current ratio, which means that NEA is in solid position to meet our current obligations by using cash and other current assets.

The General Operating Fund Statement of Activity and changes in net assets reflects total revenue and expenses by strategic priorities. Note that the increase in revenue generated from a substantial increase in membership allowed for additional expenditures in each of the strategic priorities.

Membership growth, fiscal stability and strength, and sound allocation of NEA's resources combined to make 1998-99 an outstanding year for the National Education Association.

Note: A complete copy of the NEA audit report is available upon request.

National Education Association of The United States
Statements of Financial Position By Fund at August 31, 1999
With Comparative totals as of August 31, 1998

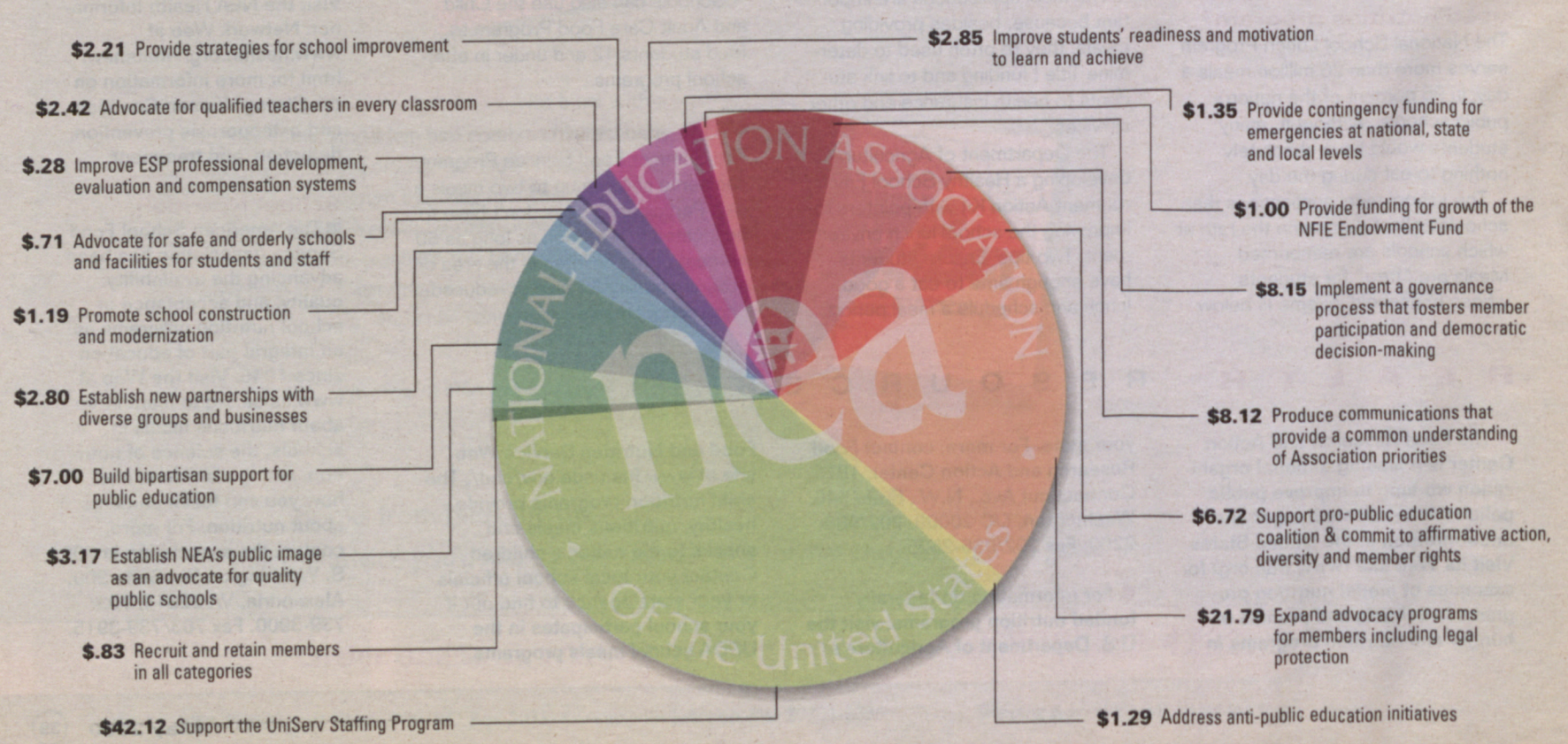
	General Operating Funds	Special Purpose Fund	Capital Improvement Funds	1999 Total Funds	1998 Total Funds
Current Assets	$48,966,919	$11,722,952	$ –	$ 60,689,871	$ 52,699,442
Long-term Assets	31,526,573	11,420,539	57,498,954	100,446,066	100,004,535
Total Assets	$80,493,492	$23,143,491	$57,498,954	$ 161,135,937	$152,703,977
Current Liabilities	$23,887,027	$ 7,489,418	$ 1,790,919	$ 33,167,364	$ 27,064,708
Long-term Liabilities	33,344,456	7,072,857	40,046,278	80,463,591	79,043,483
Total liabilities	57,231,483	14,562,275	41,837,197	113,630,955	106,108,191
Unrestricted Net Assets	23,262,009	8,581,216	15,661,757	47,504,982	46,595,786
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	$80,493,492	$23,143,491	$57,498,954	$ 161,135,937	$152,703,977

National Education Association of The United States
General Operating Fund Statement of Activity and Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended August 31, 1999

	Budget (Unaudited)	Actual
Total Revenue	$211,831,150	$218,054,046
Expenses By Strategic Priorities:		
Provide student with the skills and knowledge to function successfully in school	3,689,332	2,406,753
Ensure a qualified teacher for every classroom	3,093,658	3,674,090
Build learning environments that support student success	6,565,567	6,365,776
Promote stronger public, parental and business support for public education	19,592,149	20,795,318
Mobilize at the local, state, and national levels for the resources basic to quality schools	104,959,888	107,624,377
Provide the administrative and programmatic support vital to the achievement of NEA's goals	73,877,056	76,329,758
Total Expenses	211,777,650	217,196,072
Changes in Net Assets	$ 53,500	857,974
Unrestricted Net Assets, Beginning of Year		22,404,035
Unrestricted Net Assets, End of Year		$ 23,262,009

How your 1999-2000 dues dollars are allocated

The following is a breakdown of how NEA dues dollars are allocated to support and represent members and affiliates in their efforts to achieve the mission of the NEA. $114.00 NEA Dues (Active member, professionally employed).


$2.21 Provide strategies for school improvement
$2.42 Advocate for qualified teachers in every classroom
$.28 Improve ESP professional development, evaluation and compensation systems
$.71 Advocate for safe and orderly schools and facilities for students and staff
$1.19 Promote school construction and modernization
$2.80 Establish new partnerships with diverse groups and businesses
$7.00 Build bipartisan support for public education
$3.17 Establish NEA's public image as an advocate for quality public schools
$.83 Recruit and retain members in all categories
$42.12 Support the UniServ Staffing Program
$2.85 Improve students' readiness and motivation to learn and achieve
$1.35 Provide contingency funding for emergencies at national, state and local levels
$1.00 Provide funding for growth of the NFIE Endowment Fund
$8.15 Implement a governance process that fosters member participation and democratic decision-making
$8.12 Produce communications that provide a common understanding of Association priorities
$6.72 Support pro-public education coalition & commit to affirmative action, diversity and member rights
$21.79 Expand advocacy programs for members including legal protection
$1.29 Address anti-public education initiatives
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
Of The United States
nea

What About Bonds?

Q: Do I need bonds in my portfolio?

A: Excellent question. Traditionalists would say yes. But I'm not so sure.

Bonds provide a couple of different things for your portfolio. The two most important are income and balance. Let's start with balance. Bonds can provide balance for a stock portfolio because stocks and bonds tend to perform well in different types of market environments.

Young and middle-aged investors who plan to invest for the long term for goals like retirement and college for their children should be invested primarily in growth investments, which are stocks. Stocks provide a higher return over the long term. But they can be volatile in the short term.

That's where bonds come in. Bonds provide a lower, but more stable, return. Many financial planners say that such investors need bonds to balance the stocks, to provide diversification or proper asset allocation.

The traditional asset allocation is 60 percent stocks, 40 percent bonds. In fact, that's the default allocation for most planners.

For many Americans, though, that's too much in bonds. This allocation can put too much of a drag on a long-term portfolio. It's possible to diversify by investing in different types of stocks—large company, small company, international—and by leaving a portion of your portfolio in cash.

Cash is stable. Bonds are not. Bonds can be nearly as volatile as stocks when interest rates change rapidly.

Cash provides the additional advantage of flexibility. With a portion of your portfolio in cash, you can move into the stock market gradually or to take advantage of a dip in the market.

Now let's look at income, the second reason to buy bonds. The issuer of a bond agrees to pay a specific rate of interest, which provides the bond holder with income much like a bank certificate of deposit.

Retirees who are living off their investments may well need some income. The argument for bonds is strongest for them. Even so, these retirees should think carefully about bonds.

People are retiring earlier and living longer. Many will live for 30 or 40 years in retirement. They need stocks to provide growth and to beat inflation. Retirees who can leave a good chunk of money in stocks will have more money to live on. Money that you will not need for living expenses for three years or more is a good candidate for the stock market.

Blue-chip stocks like those in the Standard & Poor's 500 Index are good candidates. A convenient way to buy them is in an index fund like the Vanguard Index 500 Trust.

More aggressive retirees might consider the Nasdaq 100, which represents the 100 largest non-financial stocks that trade on the over-the-counter market.

This index, which can be purchased on the American Stock Index, is very tech heavy, with companies like Microsoft, Intel, Sun, and Cisco but also fast-growing retailers like Staples, Starbucks, and Bed, Bath & Beyond.

Stocks that pay high dividends provide another option for retirees. Equity-income funds typically contain such stocks. Most large fund companies sponsor one. They include Vanguard Equity Income, Fidelity Equity Income, and T. Rowe Price Equity income. Other income-producing funds include Vanguard/Wellington and Vanguard/Wellesley Income.

Q: I plan to get married. How can we get started on the right foot with our finances?

A: The first thing you need to do is talk over your goals before you get married. What is your dearest dream? Do you want children? When would you like to retire? What is the one vacation you would regret not taking? Do you want to go back to school? What is the one thing that you've always hoped to have in your home?

Talk, too, about what's a fair amount for each partner to spend on his or her own and which goals you will save for together.

Before you get married, get out of debt. Both of you. You don't want to start out your life together with a millstone around your neck.

Build a good credit record as a couple. Two credit cards is enough. Three at the most. Make sure you each have credit in your own name. And then pay the cards off every month.

Pay yourself first. Set up an automatic investment account to save and invest money each month either in a mutual fund or stock. The best way to get started is with a 403 (b) or a 401 (k) plan at work. Be certain you invest enough to capture your employer's match if there is one.

Set up Roth IRAs. These accounts are great for young people. You pay tax on the money before you put it in, but you never pay tax on the earnings. Each of you can contribute $2,000 a year to a Roth. And you can take money out, to buy a home, for example. ✔

—Mary Rowland

Rowland is an author and regular contributor to financial planning magazines.

Thrifty Educator

Each month, NEA Today *prints money-saving tips from NEA members. This month's tips come from Diane Postman, dpostman@pps.poquoson.k12.va.us, a kindergarten teacher at Poquoson Primary School in Poquoson, Virginia, and from Betty Darr, darrmt@cyberport.net, a first grade teacher at Swan River School in Bigfork, Montana:*

Diane Postman: Many teachers write a daily morning message for their students. Though I find it a wonderful teaching tool, I was concerned about wasting paper (and the cost), so I laminated five sheets of chart paper. I write my daily message on these sheets using markers that will erase. I have a variety of colors so I can use a different color to emphasize letters or words that I want to focus on.

Sometimes I allow my kids to fill in missing words or circle words that they can read. They *love* being given the pen to write with! I can do a week's worth of letters, and, at the end of the week, I just wipe them off using a damp sponge. When doing this, be sure to wear rubber gloves or your hands will end up being the colors of your pens!

Betty Darr: One tip I have found helpful is to use cereal boxes as "take-home" containers attached to the desks of each student. When I send my letter to students and parents in the summer, I ask them to bring a cereal box. The students decorate the boxes at home and bring them in the first day of school. I attach these to the desks using strapping tape. When I am given a note from the office to send home, I don't have to remember to hand it out at the end of the day. When we finish a paper together that I want sent home, the students put it right into their take-home box and it doesn't get "swallowed up" in the desk.

1.9 million

FACTOID

NEA Member Benefits has over 1.9 million account relationships with NEA members and their families.

Heads Up from NEA Member Benefits

On January 19, 2000, Nationwide Financial Services announced a change in the focus of Nationwide Retirement Solutions, the Nationwide subsidiary that markets the NEA Valuebuilder® Programs to NEA members. As a result, Nationwide will relinquish its role as the distributor for the NEA Valuebuilder® Annuity and Mutual Fund Programs effective July 2000.

Though NEA's current relationship with Nationwide extends through July, Nationwide has terminated the Valuebuilder® sales force. As a result, effective March 31, 2000, the Valuebuilder® financial services representatives are no longer available.

NEA members may continue to contribute to their accounts and receive ongoing investment advice through the toll-free Nationwide Financial Customer Service Center in Columbus, Ohio. Or members can access their accounts through the NEA Member Benefits Web site at www.neamb.com.

In February, NEA Member Benefits and Nationwide mailed a joint communication to all NEA Valuebuilder® participants, assuring them that the Valuebuilder® Programs are safe. Members were cautioned that withdrawing funds from an annuity prematurely could result in penalties and fees.

NEA Member Benefits expects to present a recommendation for sponsorship of a new Valuebuilder® distributor to the NEA Board of Directors by September 2000.

Call NEA Member Benefits at 800/637-4636 about the status of the NEA Valuebuilder® Programs. For individual Valuebuilder accounts, call the Nationwide Customer Service Center at 888/333-5610.

The 2000 NEA Representative Assembly

This July, nearly 10,000 NEA members elected by their state and local colleagues will gather in Chicago, Illinois, for the annual NEA Representative Assembly. The four-day RA is the Association's highest decision-making body. Delegates will be voting on proposed amendments to the NEA Standing Rules, Constitution, and Bylaws—all listed below—and electing the NEA Secretary-Treasurer and two members of the NEA Executive Committee.

Interested in following the debate at this year's RA? Check out the NEA Web site at www.nea.org,. On the site will be complete, day-to-day coverage of RA debates and action, plus audio and text versions of major RA addresses. The action starts July 3.

Proposed Amendments To The NEA Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: Beginning with the eighth business meeting of the Representative Assembly, each new business item considered will be subject to a vote by the Assembly whether or not the item will be debated.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate
(No location within Rule 6 is specified. If the amendment is enacted, the NEA Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules Committee will place the language of the amendment appropriately within Rule 6.)
Beginning with the eighth business meeting, debate on new business items shall proceed in the following way: after the maker of the motion has spoken to the motion, the chair will ask the delegates the following question: "Shall this item be debated?" Upon a two-thirds "no" vote, the item will not be debated and the chair shall immediately call for a vote on the item without any intervening motions or points of information.

Submitted in accordance with Standing Rule 9.D.1.a (by petition of at least 25 delegates.)
Contact Person: Tom Stahr, Michigan

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 2

TITLE: To increase to at least two (2) hours the amount of time the Representative Assembly is required to spend debating new business at all meetings after the first business meeting.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate
K. (fifth paragraph)
Items of new business submitted in accordance with this section shall be the first business item at all business meetings except the first business meeting of the Representative Assembly, and these new business items shall be considered for at least [one] two hours.

Submitted in accordance with Standing Rule 9.D.1.a (by petition of at least 25 delegates.)
Contact Persons: Carolyn Underwood, Florida and Gail Husbands, Florida

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 3

TITLE: To change the deadline for submission of new business items considered by the Representative Assembly from 12:00 noon on the second day of the Assembly to the end of the second business meeting.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate
K. (paragraph 3)
New business shall be submitted to the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws and Rules no later than [12 noon on the second day] the end of the second business meeting. (no further changes)

Submitted in accordance with Standing Rule 9.D.1.a (by petition of at least 25 delegates.)
Contact Person: Sharon White, Indiana

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To insert the word "public" between the words "for" and " education" in line 2 of the Preamble of the NEA Constitution.

Preamble
We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, in order that the Association may serve as the national voice for public education,...(no further changes)

Submitted in accordance with Constitution Article IX (by petition of at least 50 delegates.)
Contact Person: Ron Miller, Massachusetts

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 2

TITLE: To provide a method to determine allocation of NEA Representative Assembly delegate credentials for state and local dual-national affiliates and representation on the NEA Board of Directors for dual-national state affiliates.

Article III.
Representative Assembly
Section 2. Allocation of Delegates

a. Except as otherwise provided in Subsection (c) below, [A]allocation of delegate credentials to state affiliates shall be based on the ratio of 1:1,000 Active members of the Association within the state. No state shall receive fewer than fifteen (15) delegate credentials. Other delegate credentials shall be allocated as provided in the Bylaws.

b. Except as otherwise provided in Subsection (c) below, [a]llocation of delegate credentials to local affiliates shall be based on the ratio of 1:150 Active members of the Association or major fraction thereof. Local affiliates within a state may similarly join together to form membership units for the purpose of representation. Allocation of delegate credentials for such clustered local affiliates shall be based on the ratio of 1:150 Active members of the Association or major fraction thereof.

c. The ratios to be used for the allocation of delegate credentials to state affiliates, dual-national state affiliates, and dual-national local affiliates shall be proportionately adjusted to reflect the reduction in Association dues paid by Active members of such affiliates pursuant to Bylaw 2-7.n., provided that this Article III, Section 2 (c) shall not apply to Active members of a dual-national local affiliate (i) in a state that does not have a dual-national state affiliate, and (ii) that became affiliated with the Association as a dual-national local affiliate prior to September 1, 1999.

[c.] d. The Bylaws shall define the term *ethnic minority* and shall seek to achieve ethnic-minority representation in the Representative Assembly.

Article V. Board Of Directors
Section 1. Composition
The Board shall consist of (a) at least one (1) director from each association affiliated with the Association as a state affiliate, (b) six (6) directors for the Retired members of the Association, and (c) three (3) directors for the Student members of the Association.

Except as otherwise provided below, [e]ach state unit shall be entitled to an additional director for each 20,000 Active members of the Association, provided that if the number of state directors reaches one hundred fifty (150), the number of directors to which the state units are entitled shall be adjusted to prevent the total from exceeding one hundred fifty (150). The Board of Directors shall adopt rules for implementing this provision. The number of Active members of the Association that shall be required to entitle a state affiliate or a dual-national state affiliate to an additional director shall be proportionately adjusted to reflect the reduction in Association dues paid by such members pursuant to Bylaw 2-7.n., provided that this Article V, Section 1, shall not apply to Active members of a dual-national local affiliate (i) in a state that does not have a dual-national state affiliate, and (ii) that became affiliated with the Association as a dual-national local affiliate prior to September 1, 1999. [Remainder of Article V, Section 2, unchanged]

Submitted in accordance with Constitution Article IX (by majority vote of the Board of Directors.)
Contact: NEA Board of Directors

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 3

TITLE: To require that members with permanent physical disabilities comprise at least one percent (1%) of the NEA Board of Directors.

Article V. Board of Directors
Section 1. Composition
c.Members from ethnic minorities shall comprise at least twenty (20) percent of the Board and members with permanent physical disabilities shall comprise at least one (1) percent of the Board. The Representative Assembly shall elect additional directors as appropriate to assure such [ethnic-minority representation] representation of ethnic minorit[y]ies and people with permanent physical disabilities. (no further changes)

Submitted in accordance with Constitution Article IX (by petition of at least 50 delegates.)
Contact Person: Eric Berg, California

BYLAW AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To establish dues at one fourth the dues of Active members employed full-time for persons eligible for Active membership who are employed for twenty-five percent or less the normal schedule of a full-time employee.

Bylaw 2-7 Membership Dues
- c.-no changes

d. The membership fees for persons eligible for Active membership who are regularly employed for fifty (50) percent or less, but greater than twenty-five (25) percent, of the normal schedule for a full-time employee, who are not employed as substitutes, and who not are eligible for membership as a full-time employee through another local association (as verified by the local association) shall be one-half (1/2) of the Active dues as appropriate. The membership fee for persons eligible for Active membership who are regularly employed for twenty-five (25) percent or less of the normal schedule for a full-time employee, who are not employed as substitutes, and who are not eligible for membership as a full-time or part-time employee through another local association (as verified by the local association) shall be one quarter (1/4) of the dues of Active members engaged in professional educational employment. (no further changes)

Submitted in accordance with Constitution Article IX (by petition of at least 100 Active members from at least two states.)
Contact Person: Anne Davis, Illinois

BYLAW AMENDMENT 2

TENTATIVE TITLE: To empower the NEA Representative Assembly to increase membership dues and/or impose an assessment for the purpose of establishing a special fund to assist Association affiliates with ballot initiatives, legislation, and other measures to attain the goals of the Association.

Bylaw 2-11 (new)
The Representative Assembly may increase membership dues and/or impose an assessment for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a special fund to assist Association affiliates in connection with ballot initiatives, legislation, and other measures that are relevant to the attainment of the goals and objectives of the Association. The amount of, membership categories subject to, and effective date of any such dues increase or assessment shall be determined by the Representative Assembly.

Submitted in accordance with Constitution Article IX (by majority vote of the Board of Directors.)
Contact: NEA Board of Directors

BYLAW AMENDMENT 3

TITLE: To make Retired members eligible to serve on the NEA Review Board.

Bylaw 7-1 Review Board

The Review Board shall comprise nine (9) members, at least two (2) of whom shall be members of ethnic-minority groups, appointed for five (5) year staggered terms beginning September 1. No person shall be eligible for reappointment to a regular term.

Members of the Review Board shall have been Active and/or Retired members of the Association for five (5) consecutive years immediately prior to appointment. Time spent by an Active member in the Educational Support membership category shall be counted for purposes of the five (5) year requirement. Members of the Review Board shall maintain Active or Retired membership.

(no further changes)

Submitted in accordance with Constitution Article IX (by majority vote of the Board of Directors.)
Contact: NEA Board of Directors/Ruthanne Phillips

BYLAW AMENDMENT 4

TITLE: To allow NEA members to designate the allocation of the "political activity" portion of their dues through the annual publication of a checklist of options in *NEA Today*.

Bylaw 11 General Finance Section 9 Budget
(new) **f.** All members shall be given the opportunity to designate where the political activity portion of their dues money is to be allocated.
(new) **g.** A checklist of specific options will be published annually in *NEA Today*.

Submitted in accordance with Constitution Article IX (by petition of at least 50 delegates.)
Contact Person: Christine Nowak, New York

Candidates Running for NEA Office

Dennis Van Roekel
Candidate for NEA Secretary-Treasurer

The new century is upon us! It is no longer an item of speculation and curiosity: it is our reality. Now, more than ever, we must work hard to restore public confidence in public education. I share your dreams and high hopes for America's public schools, for our members, and for the students we teach. As Secretary-Treasurer, I worked to involve you in NEA's effort to use our resources in ways that are effective, efficient, and meaningful. I want NEA to remain on the move, forever improving our ability to make a difference in the lives of our members and to advocate for human & civil rights.

I ask for your support for a second term as NEA Secretary-Treasurer. Together, we cannot fail.

Iona Holloway
Candidate for NEA Executive Committee

For the past three years, as a member of the NEA Executive Committee, it has been my pleasure and privilege to represent the members of the NEA. I have seen first hand that our members are the true unsung heroes of America's public schools. Each day they perform miracles in their classrooms and make the difference in the lives of our children.

During my twenty years as a paraprofessional and Association activist at all levels, I have been proud to be a part of an organization which strenuously advocates for its members but never loses sight of why we're really here- providing our students with the best education possible.

The NEA must continue to speak with a strong voice for its members and the children they are preparing for the new millennium. A demand for better working conditions and increased member rights comes with an obligation to be held accountable and to make certain that we demand excellence from all who touch our students' lives.

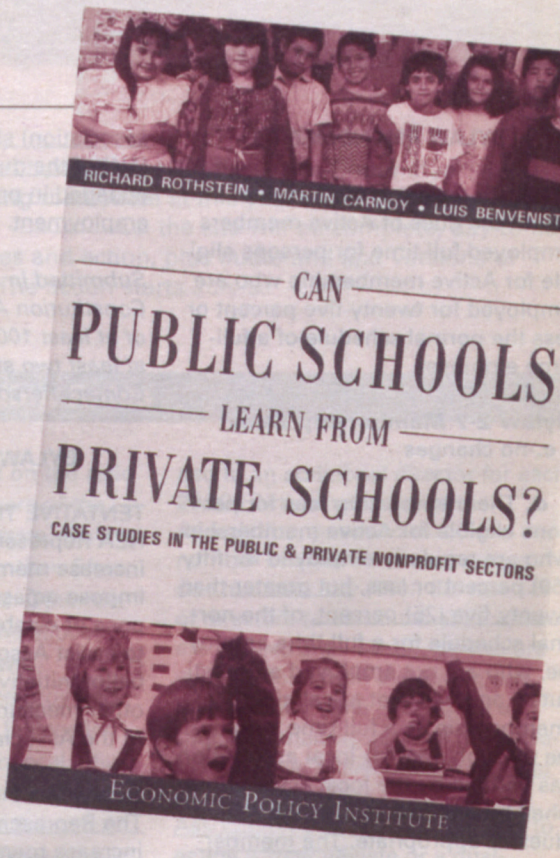
Dan Sakota
Candidate for NEA Executive Committee

NEA has an important role to play in the education profession. It's paramount that we elect leaders which shape our profession and keep public education a reality. We must continue to build a stronger organization that will readily accept the increasing challenges facing us. We must seize our opportunities, setting the pace and be the change agents for public education. We must take risks that will lead to restoring the public's confidence in public education, embrace our diversity and remain focused that every child deserves a quality public education.

"Excellence can be attained if you care more than others think is wise, risk more than others think is safe, expect more than others think is possible and dream more then others think is practical."

Lessons From the Other Side

Researchers go on site visits to see what private schools can teach public schools—and come back with a surprising answer.



CAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS LEARN FROM PRIVATE SCHOOLS?
By Richard Rothstein, Martin Carnoy, and Luis Benveniste
Economic Policy Institute, 86 pp., $13.95, available at www.epinet.org

Not so long ago, our public schools were considered engines of democracy and prosperity, churning out citizen-workers equipped with the "know-how" to build our great land.

Today, many commentators claim, our public schools' chief product is failure. We must look to the private sector, they assert, for lessons on how to prepare the next generation.

Three researchers from the Economic Policy Institute recently set out to find those lessons by visiting 16 schools—public, charter, and private—with rich, middle-income, and poor students. They came back with an eye-opening report.

What can public schools learn from private schools? Their answer is, "Not much." The researchers found several schools with practices worth emulating, but these schools were just as likely to be public as private.

In fact, the big differences the researchers found were not between public and private schools, but between rich and poor.

EPI tested several common generalizations about the supposed advantages of private schools. One is that private schools are responsive to parents, while public schools thumb their noses at parents.

What the EPI researchers found was that no schools, public or private, want to be accountable to parents for educational decisions.

Schools with high-income students, they discovered, spent considerable energy fending off interference from parents who wanted teachers to change the way they taught. One public school teacher said she got a letter a week from each of her children's parents.

Private schools resisted interference by telling parents they were free to take their children elsewhere. Public schools just lived with it.

Schools with middle-income parents recruited them to help, by, for example, monitoring homework and limiting TV. Schools with low-income parents also tried to get parents to help, but were less successful —except for one diverse, urban school that put on a particularly vigorous outreach campaign.

Teachers at this school assigned homework that involved the whole family. The school hired parent coordinators. And it cooperated with a neighborhood center to offer child care and courses in parenting and literacy. This was a *public* school.

The school least receptive to parents was the only for-profit institution in the study. It served mostly middle-class children. The principal described the school's philosophy as, "Leave them at the gate, we'll educate!"

This school featured a low-paid, inexperienced staff with 40 percent turnover.

The researchers also looked at how public and private school principals dealt with teachers who they felt were sub-par. In public schools, it was rare for an experienced teacher to be fired—and the researchers found this just as true in private schools.

"We found Catholic school procedures to be nearly as cumbersome and bureaucratic as those in public schools," writes the EPI team.

As a result, Catholic school principals dealt with "unsatisfactory teachers" by either accepting the situation or engaging in subtle harassment and hoping the unsatisfactory teacher would resign.

This short book will help you talk with anyone who thinks that the private sector knows best. Instead of theorizing about how public and private schools might differ, these researchers walked through the school door to see for themselves.

That's a model private school advocates could learn from. ✔

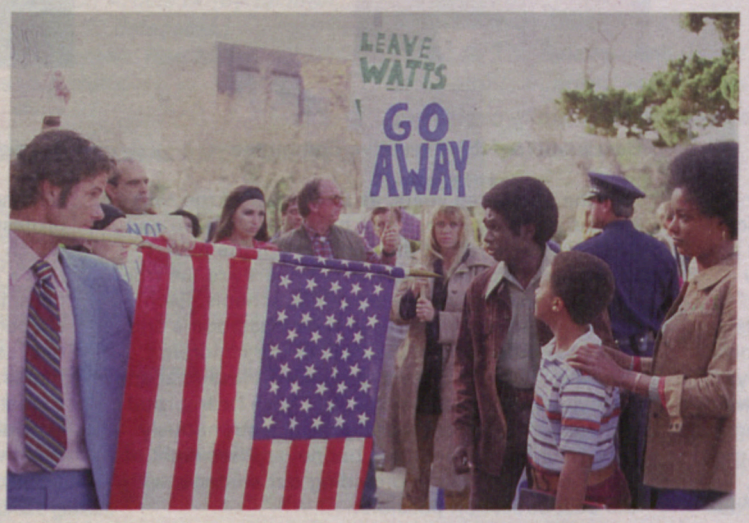
EXCERPT

At Tatuna Point, a neighborhood public elementary school in an affluent neighborhood of professionals and executives … parent questioning of school and classroom management has become so extensive that the school established an ombudsman team that organizes and researches parent complaints and publishes summaries in a weekly school bulletin. Complaints typically range from how much protein ... school lunch items contain ... to whether a teacher has progressed far enough in the social studies curriculum ... to whether fractions are properly sequenced in the arithmetic curriculum.

TVTIPS

The '70s

NBC, May,
Check local listings.



This miniseries explores the politics, pop culture, and music of the '70s through the lives of several friends who become closely involved with the major events and movements of the decade, including the National Guard confrontation at Kent State, the feminist movement and ERA, growing environmental awareness, the Watergate scandal, the drug culture, and race tensions. Visit www.nbc.com for more information. ✔

Hawaiian History
Dr. Phil Barnes
From the first human landfall through the sovereignty movement of the late 1990s, *A Concise History of the Hawaiian Islands* provides a close look at Hawaii's past. Written in an informal style for older children, this book encourages a multicultural perspective in the classroom.
$9.95 plus $2.50 s&h from Phil Barnes, RR2 Box 4756, Pahoa, HI 96778, 877/849-8986 or greenhi@interpac.net. On the Web at www.coconutlanding.com/concisehistory.html.

FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

High School Science

Secondary teachers throughout the U.S. are being mailed a free new physical science unit centered on energy. *Energy Transformations in an Automobile* includes a 15-minute video, with a 20-page teacher's guide that presents activities to help students understand the first law of thermodynamics, the conversion of energy, and the transformation of energy from one form to another. If you are a science department chair and have not received your copy, call the National Foundation for Energy Education (NFEE) at 888/860-1222.

Nature Discoveries

Children ages 4-12 will discover the magical world of the butterfly life cycle with *Monarch Magic! Butterfly Activities and Nature Discoveries*. This colorful book features concise facts about caterpillars and butterflies, along with activity suggestions. It also comes with a free teacher's guide. $12.95 plus $3.20 s&h, from Williamson Publishing Company, Church Hill Rd., P.O. Box 185, Charlotte, VT 05445. 800/234-8791. On the Web at www.williamsonbooks.com.

ERIC Resources

The Educational Resources Information Center offers many free resources for teachers. For ERIC's latest annual report or a free pocket guide to the organization, call

800/LET-ERIC (538-3742). ERIC also offers a free Internet-based service that provides education information to educators and parents including lesson plans, info guides, education listserv archives, and more. On the Web at www. askeric.org.

Creative Classrooms

Creativity in the Classroom: An Exploration is the first volume of a new teaching guide and professional development program from the Disney Learning Partnership. The free 45-minute video and educator's guide demonstrates a wide range of practices employed by teachers today and helps teachers begin a dialogue about creativity in the classroom. For your copy, write to Creativity in the Classroom c/o Disney Learning Partnership, 500 Buena Vista St., Burbank, CA 91521. Include a brief outline of plans for use on school letterhead. On the Web at www.Disney Learning.org.

Navajo Culture News

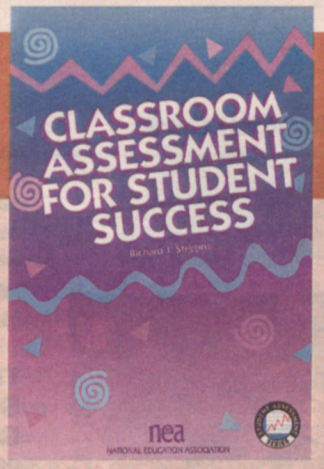
Learn the latest Navajo news, from the Rough Rock Community School and the Arizona Community Foundation, via a monthly newspaper about Native Americans called *Navajo Culture Today*. Subscriptions are available at $12 per year (10 issues). For school bulk sales, contact 520/728-3508 or 520/728-3590. *Navajo Culture Today*, Rough Rock TP#PTT, HC61 Box 1480, Chinle, AZ 86503.

High School Social Studies

Social studies teachers, are you looking for a free catalog for low-cost books and videotapes? Your search will end when you discover this brochure featuring books on social studies issues past and present. From Close Up Publishing, Dept. R40, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Alexandria, VA 222314-1592, 800/765-1313. On the Web at www.closeup.org.

Awesome Experiments

The black-and-white illustrations are clever, the experiments varied, in a new book from Michael DiSpezio, a prolific science writer. *Awesome Experiments in Electricity & Magnetism* is a practical and fun book. $7.95 from bookstores.



NEW from the NEA Professional Library

Classroom Assessment for Student Success
Richard J. Stiggins
57 pp., $5.95, #2071-5-00-F

How do we test? Author Richard Stiggins shows you how to help your school use assessment to promote student achievement. Stiggins covers such topics as how to use the assessment process to inspire and energize students and also examines assessment literacy—how to collect reliable information that can help maximize achievement. His book also includes a professional development strategy to help educators fulfill their assessment responsibilities and improve their own assessment literacy.

EXCERPT

We are becoming very sophisticated at weaving day-to-day classroom assessment into the teaching and learning process. For example, we can open up the assessment design and development processes and bring students in as full partners, thus turning assessments into powerfully focused and highly motivational learning experiences. We are poised to emerge from counterproductive assessment environments into an array of assessment applications that will be far more constructive for students.

For more information or to order, call 800/229-4200, or check the Web at www.nea.org/books.

BOOKS by NEA Members

Math Adventures

Nancy Kelly Allen, illustrated by Adam Doyle
Once Upon A Dime, A Math Adventure is a picture book for young children that tells the delightful story of a farmer who finds out that money really does grow on trees. $6.50 plus $3.50 s&h, from Charlesbridge Publishing, 85 Main St., Watertown, MA 02472. 617/926-0329.

30 Years by the Chalkboard

John B. Mollan
A retired teacher reveals his often humorous thoughts and recollections about a life spent teaching in his new book, *30 Years by the Chalkboard, Some Irreverent Observations on Education*. $9.95 plush $3 s&h, from Educational Passport Options Books, PMB 237, 11500 NE 76th St. A3, Vancouver, WA 98662, 360/892-1679. Fax 603/843-5540.

Free the Children!

Susan Fitzell
Free the Children! Conflict Education for Strong and Peaceful Minds offers a unique approach to helping children break free from aggression and conflict. This book is designed for both educators and parents, with a focus on children grades pre-K through 12. $14.95 plus $4 s&h, from New Society Publishers, P.O. Box 189 Gabriola Island, B.C. Canada, V0R 1X0. 800/567-6772, Fax 250-247-7471. On the Web at www.newsociety.com/aut.html.

Reading Skill Builder

Bruce and Kathryn Howlett
Phonemic Awareness for Sound Reading Success is an instructor's manual and workbook package designed to help children build essential reading skills. The program uses our sense of speech perception to reach the source of reading difficulties. $16 plus $3 s&h, from ISRP Press, 379 Turkey Hill Road, Ithaca, NY 14850. 800/716-2887.

Ask Jeeves For Kids!
AJkids.com
How do I become an astronaut?
Do your kids have questions? They can get the answers at AJkids.com.
Ask!
© 2000 Ask Jeeves, Inc. All rights reserved.

TV TIPS

Michael Palin's Hemingway Adventure

PBS, Wednesdays, May 3-10, 9-11 pm, ET, check local listings. In this four-part documentary, comedian Michael Palin travels the world visiting locations that were special to Ernest Hemingway and informed his writing. Following the author's adventurous lifestyle means investigating bullfights in Spain, a big game park in Kenya, World War I battlefields in Italy, and tiny apartments and cafés in Paris. Palin also goes marlin fishing in Cuba, visits several of Hemingway's homes, and attends a Hemingway look-alike contest in Key West. Visit www.pbs.org for more information.

In Search of Law and Order: Reclaiming America's Kids

PBS, Thursdays, May 11-25, 10-11 pm, ET, check local listings. This three-part series examines the juvenile justice system and its efficacy in promoting public safety. The programs deal with the scope and causes of youth crime, community-based alternatives to the juvenile justice system, and grassroots efforts that address the root causes of juvenile crime. Viewers hear from professionals working within the system, community members, and young offenders. Visit www.pbs.org/lawandorder for transcripts, community action suggestions, and other resources.

Sahara

PBS, Wednesday, May 24, 9-11 pm ET, check local listings. In this nature documentary, the Sahara region is shown to host a wide variety of life despite its harsh extremes of climate. The program showcases eagles, monitor lizards, foxes, leopards, and other creatures that are uniquely adapted to live in the desert's searing heat, windstorms, and infrequent rainfall. See www.pbs.org for more information.

The Source: The Story of the Beat Generation

PBS, Wednesday, May 31, 9-10:30 pm, ET, check local listings. This documentary from the "American Masters" series traces the course of the Beat Generation from the meeting of Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs in the 1940s through the countercultural movements of the last 50 years. With special attention to the Beats' influence on art, politics, and popular culture, the program features the music of the period, dramatized readings of important literature, and interviews with Ken Kesey, Norman Mailer, Jerry Garcia, and other cultural figures. See www.thirteen.org for more information.

Choose or Lose

MTV, through November 2000. This voter registration campaign from Music Television is a forum for young people to learn about and discuss the 2000 election. The Choose or Lose Web site offers investigative stories, a searchable database of the candidates' speeches and debates, and features that allow participants to comment and vote on important issues. In addition, the site provides a schedule of primaries, caucuses, and conventions; transcripts of Choose or Lose news features on MTV; and links to candidate Web sites, news sources, and voting advocacy programs for youth. See www.chooseorlose.com for complete information.

Americanos: Latino Life in the United States

HBO, May, check local listings. This documentary airs as part of a multimedia project, led by actor and activist Edward James Olmos, to celebrate and increase awareness of the history and culture of the United States' large Latino population. The documentary accompanies the Smithsonian photographic exhibition of the same name, a collection of 120 pictures of Latinos of all ages, from all walks of life, and from diverse backgrounds. The program will feature interviews with people from the photos as well as famous Latin-Americans, all of whom offer insight into the fastest-growing culture in the U.S. A companion book is available in stores.

My So-Called Life

Fox Family Channel, Fridays, 8-9 pm, ET. This acclaimed series centers on Angela Chase, an intelligent 15-year-old sophomore at Liberty High for whom adolescence is a series of trials. In addition to the demands of school and family, Angela must negotiate the crushes, rivalries, and pitfalls of her complicated social life while helping her friends through their experiences with drug abuse, violence, and depression. The series has been widely praised for its realistic depiction of contemporary families, lifestyles, and values. Visit www.mscl.com for episode descriptions, character profiles, and essays on the series.

Truth PSAs

Public service announcements on several networks. Presented as commercial parodies, these PSAs depict common products like soda, sneakers, and acne cream that turn out to be lethal. For a popular product to kill its users would be absurd, but as these PSAs point out, tobacco does just that. Truth, the non-profit organization that produces these commercials, offers a teen-oriented Web site using media and research to spread the truth about how tobacco companies work, their advertising and lobbying strategies, and their knowledge of tobacco's health risks and addictive nature. The site lists numerous resources for getting involved, quitting smoking, and finding other anti-tobacco organizations. See www.thetruth.com for complete information.

The Futures Channel

This new digital content service from the Foundation for Advancements in Science and Education offers direct access to educational video, sound, image, and print resources, including all of FASE Productions' award-winning educational series. The digital format allows educators to preview and download Futures Channel programs for use in their own classrooms. Specializing in math and science curricula, the FASE and Futures Channel resources also include lesson plans and professional development materials for teachers. Visit www.futureschannel.com or www.fasenet.org for more complete information.

KIDSNET, a national resource for children's media in Washington, D.C., provides these listings. For more information on children's shows, check out the KIDSNET Web site at www.kidsnet.org.

FREE OR INEXPENSIVE

Glorious Glue

Learn how to incorporate shape, form, texture, and color into great gluey artworks with this resource for all ages. Each project gives trash a new life by using environmentally safe materials, including string and old newspaper for printmaking, collage, and sculpting. This book offers information on evaluating completed

works, and also provides a helpful glossary of definitions to guide new artists. $17.95 plus $3.95 s&h, from J. Weston Walch, Publisher, P.O. Box 658, Portland, ME 04104, 800/341-6094. On the Web at www.walch.com.

Understanding The World
The State of the World Atlas provides a unique visual survey of the economic, political, and social trends of the world as it enters the 21st century. Topics such as information technology, international trade, and war and peace are easily understandable through this book's full-color maps and graphics. $17.95 plus $2.75 s&h, from Penguin Putnam, Inc., P.O. Box 12289 Newark, NJ 07101 800/788-6262.

Central American Children Speak
This video and study guide duo is designed to help children gain a basic understanding of one another. Stories of Nicaraguan and Guatemalan children express the mutual concerns of all children, including family, play, education, work, and safety to teach young students that they are all members of the same human family. This learning resource, designed for grades 4-12 and adults, includes activities, stories, and background information for educators. $60 plus $5 s&h, from Resource Center of The Americas, 3019 Minnehaha Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55406, 612/276-0801, fax 612/276-0898. On the Web at bookstore@americas.org.

Educators As Learners
This book offers a theoretical framework and practical guidance for renewing the capacity of schools to produce positive results for all children. Described as, "nothing less than a lesson plan for building a learning community," this book presents lively case studies and activities that show how to build a professional development model that supports educators and families in learning and growing together. (Product no. 100005) $23.95 plus $5 s&h, from ASCD, 1703 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria, VA 22311, 800/933-2723.

Great Beginnings
Thirty-five-year veteran teacher Ira Hayes presents this collection of essays for English language arts teachers, and the people who mentor them.

It offers practical advice on subjects ranging from evaluating student writing to creating support systems for beginning teachers. In this book, teachers share their stories of good beginnings to help others become teachers with a "Capital T." $25.95 plus $2 s&h, from NCTE, 1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, IL, 61801-1096, 877/369-6283 Email: orders@ncte.org.

The Human Body
101 Things Every Kid Should Know About the Human Body introduces students to the wondrous workings of the human body

REPORT CARD

Social Skills:

WORKS WELL WITH OTHERS

Evaluation:

Saturn was recently evaluated
by a number of educators.
And it looks like we got a pretty good response.

Not too long ago, a group of educators came to the Saturn plant, armed with plenty of paper and pencils, to find out how our union works with our management. And since it doesn't really qualify as a trade secret, we told them: We work as though we're on the same team—because we are. So when we make decisions, we make them together, and when we need to solve a problem, we do that together too. Now, some of these people have developed similar partnerships in their own districts. So we formed a partnership with the NEA, and we started an awards program, to recognize school districts that use teamwork to improve the quality of their schools. So when a school board works together with teachers, toward a common goal, we give the district an award—because we think what they're trying to do is important. (Besides, after years of giving out stars and happy faces, they deserve some encouragement too.)

SATURN UAW

For more information about the Saturn/UAW partnership award, or to nominate your school district, please call us at 1-800-738-1817. For more information about Saturn, visit our Web site at www.saturn.com. ©2000 Saturn Corporation.

A DIFFERENT KIND *of* COMPANY. A DIFFERENT KIND *of* CAR.

through 101 basic concepts. This book is a tool to educate middle school through high school students about cells, body systems, and more. $ 9.95 plus $5 s&h, from NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group 4255 West Touhy Ave., Lincolnwood, IL 60646-1975. 847/679-5500. Fax 847/679-2494.

SAT Words
A strong vocabulary is key to success on the SAT and PSAT tests. ***SAT Word Flash*** features vocabulary lessons with 360 words, quizzes to test word knowledge, and a useful index to all of the words in the book. $7.95 plus $3 s&h, from Peterson's, Princeton Pike Corporate Center, 2000 Lenox Dr., Lawrenceville, NJ 08648. 609/896-1800. Fax 609/ 896-4531. On the Web at www.petersons.com.

Build Character
Character Education Connections for School, Home and Community is a guide for integrating character education into grades pre-k through 12. The book will assist with creating messages for youth that foster thoughtful actions and build a home-school-community partnership. $39.95 plus $4.50 s&h, from National Professional Resources, Inc., 25 South Regent St., Port Chester, NY 10573 800/453-7461 Fax: 914/937-9327. On the Web at www.nprinc.com.

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ATNT0500

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dow Jones Teacher Awards
National High School Journalism Teacher Awards Program. This annual competition identifies the National High School Journalism Teacher of the Year who acts as a spokesperson for scholastic journalism, as well as four Distinguished Advisers and several teachers cited as special recognition award winners.

The winning teacher will speak to the fall convention of the Journalism Education Association/National Scholastic Press Association in Kansas City, Mo., on Nov. 18. In addition, a student at the high school of the Teacher of the Year will receive a $1,000 college scholarship to study news-editorial journalism. One student at each of the four Distinguished Advisers' schools will receive $500 college scholarships. Application forms are available from the Newspaper Fund by writing to P.O. Box 300, Princeton, NJ 08543-0300, or by calling 609-452-2820. A form can be downloaded from the Teacher Programs section of the Fund's Web site at http://www.dowjones.com/newsfund/TOYform.html.

New Census Info
It's your future, don't leave it blank. Don't be missed in this year's Census. Censusnetwork.org is a new resource on the Census 2000 initiative that provides direct links to stakeholder organizations, information on the census undercount for states, cities, and other geographic areas, fact sheets, links to the Census Bureau, a Q&A section, and much more. On the Web at www.censusnetwork.org.

Operation Day's Work
Jump-start your school's community service activities with this student-run national program. Operation Day's Work empowers young people to show the world that they can be leaders, educates them on global issues, and teaches them

the importance of volunteerism. For one day in the spring, students work in their community to raise money to support education in a developing country. They also serve as national committee members, making policy decisions and urging support for the program. For more information call 202-712-4021 or fill out an online application at http://odw.info.usaid.org.

New From Disney
Disney recently launched a new Web site specifically for educators. The Teaching Center offers hundreds of resources including subject-specific Internet tours with links to education Web sites, innovative lesson plans, activity-specific teaching strategies, and message board forums on a range of teaching topics. On the Web at www.DisneyLearning.org.

Scholarships for High Schoolers
Applications for the second annual Siemens Westinghouse Science & Technology Competition—a national science, math, and technology research contest for high school students—are now available online. The foundation will award more than $1 million in college scholarships and awards to students, including scholarships for all individual and team runners-up, both on the regional and state level. Apply by October 1, 2000. On the Web at www.siemens-foundation.org.

Gates' Grants For Education
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will provide more than $350 million over three years to education in the form of four grant programs. The State Challenge Grant for Leadership Development will provide more than $100 million to ensure that administrators across the nation have access to quality leadership development. For Educators in Washington State, Teacher Leadership Grants will be used to train teachers on using technology in the classroom and School Grants and District Grants will be used to improve teaching and learning as well as increase technology in the classroom. Twenty districts nationally will also be available for the $150 million in District Grants. For complete info and grant guidelines visit www.gatesfoundation.org.

MULTIMEDIA

Crossing Disciplines
Bridgestone Multimedia offers a wide range of videos and CD-Roms for use in the classroom. Instructional videos and CD-Roms cover reading, arithmetic, and writing for children ages 3 to 8, plus documentaries about dinosaurs as seen on the Learning Channel. Other videos for children, ages 6-13, document the lives of famous people: Martin Luther King, Jr., Thomas Jefferson, Winston Churchill, Marie Curie, Thomas Edison, Aristotle, and Leonardo da Vinci. Others feature familiar tales told by well-known personalities, including Angelica Huston (Rip Van Winkle), Danny Aiello (Pinocchio), John Candy (Stormalong), Nicholas Cage (Davy

Crockett), and Denzel Washington (John Henry). For information on prices and ordering, call 480/940-5777, ext. 7906 or fax to 480/940-4484.

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HFNT0500

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Where did he learn to pour himself into everything he does?

During the week,
he teaches 4th through 6th grades.
On weekends,
he manages a McDonald's.®
Why?

Shahid Muhammad

"I do it
for the kids,"
says Shahid.
"A big part of my job
here is to help
crew members learn about
responsibility and teamwork.
As a teacher, I do the same thing.
In both jobs,
I prepare young people for real life."

Thanks, Shahid,
for pouring everything you have
into everything you do.

Where can your students
learn values
that last
a lifetime?

1955 1960 1965 1970 1975 1980 1985 1990 1995 2000

did somebody say McDonald's?®

WEB WINNERS

Mostly Mars

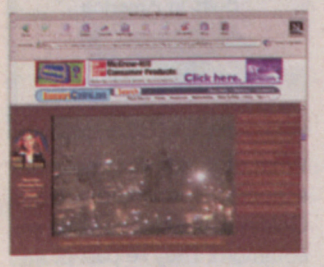
This NASA Web module covers the discovery of molecules, including the first

organic molecules thought to be of Martian origin and the nature of astromaterials. These topics then lead through the NASA Web site and related outside sources. There are also specific reference sources—including press releases, scientists' biographies, photographs, and a galaxy of related material. On the Web at http://rsd.gsfc.nasa.gov/marslife.

Dive In

Take a virtual plunge on Extreme 2000 Voyage to the Deep Web site. Climb aboard Alvin and learn about the ocean's ecology, chemistry, and more! On the Web at www.ocean.udel.edu/deepsea.

KremlinKam



Live shots come through this engaging Web site from Moscow. Young students should enjoy seeing scenes from an unfamiliar country. Among the pictures: some of the most beautiful and historical buildings on Earth. See it on the Web at www.kremlinkam.com.

Cryptic Site

The National Security Agency has a history of intrigue dotted with all sorts of secret codes that are revealed in these 13 exhibits on its Web site. The subjects include the Black Chamber, Enigma, and Codetalkers. Here you'll learn that George Washington, while never a codebreaker himself, recognized the value of military intelligence and used the secret arts—including codebreaking—

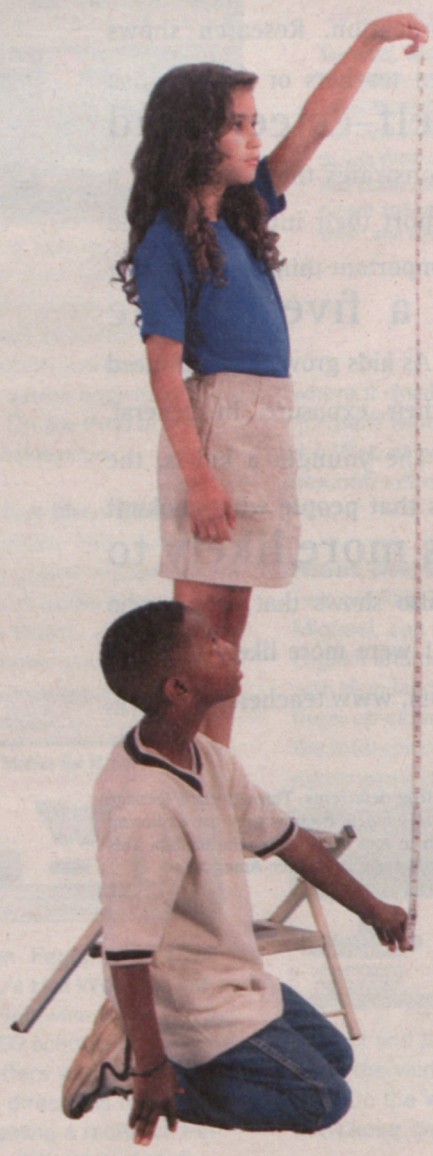
during the American Revolutionary War. The main topics include the American Civil War, codebreaking in World War II, and entry into the supercomputer era. Truly an insight into the few places to view the secret world of cryptology. On the Web at www.nsa.gov/museum/tour.html.

All About Plastics

The American Plastics Council (APC) and the National Middle Level Science Teachers Association have joined forces on a new Web site, www.handsonplastics.com. The site incorporates most of the activities available in a plastics education kit that's been used around the country.

With the 2000 elections coming up, we need to know which candidates are — and aren't — supporting the issues that have a positive impact on children and public schools. That's why, before our Association recommends any candidates, we make sure they measure up on the issues we care about — issues like vouchers.

Let's make candidates measure up for children and public education



How do the two likely Presidential candidates measure up on providing taxpayer-funded vouchers for private school tuition? Here are their public positions on the issue.

George Bush

"I think people are afraid that vouchers will hurt public schools. I disagree."
Dallas Morning News, November 9, 1999

"I think that the voucher bill ought to be given a chance to get to the Senate floor. I think it's necessary for Texas, I think it's a good bill. I support it strongly."
Austin American-Statesman, June 24, 1999

"Parents ought to be free to make choices, regardless of the nature of the institutions that they choose to help."
Comment on federal court ruling that found the Cleveland school voucher program unconstitutional, Associated Press, August 26, 1999

Al Gore

"We reject the risky voucher schemes that would drain precious dollars from our public schools, and the 90 percent of American children who attend them. We need to build up our public schools, not abandon them."
Address, August 9, 1997

"I have always been against school vouchers because they drain our public schools of funding for children who need it the most — those who cannot afford to go to a private school."
Interactive Town Hall, Gore2000, August 10, 1999

"I oppose any proposal that would divert funds from our public schools. I believe we must focus our efforts on strengthening the public schools that serve nearly 90 percent of our nation's schoolchildren, rather than siphoning funding away from public elementary or secondary schools through risky schemes like vouchers to subsidize tuition at private and parochial schools."
Associated Press, January 31, 2000

NEA Election 2000: Making Sure Candidates Listen To Us

Your Voice Is Important... Let us know what you think by visiting our Web site @ **www.nea.org/lac**

APC says the site is a resource for helping teachers answer some basic chemistry questions about plastics. A CD-ROM of the curriculum unit is also available. To order the materials needed to conduct classroom activities demonstrated on the Web site, call 1/800-243-5790 or fill out the order form that is available at the Web site.

All About America

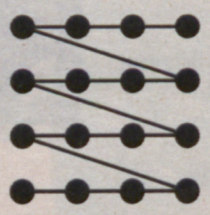
All you need is a Web-connected computer to gain access to some of the great treasures of America's history. The National Archives and Records Administration presents a virtual exhibit hall of documents and images. On the Web at www.nara.gov/exhall.

On the Record

Turn your Web browser into an audio time machine. History and Politics Out Loud provides a searchable archive of politically significant audio materials. Includes speeches by Martin Luther King, Jr., and Watergate scandal recordings. On the Web at www.hpol.org.

✳ COMMUNICATION. THE ANTI-DRUG.

A positive relationship cannot exist without communication. Research shows that kids believe they have valuable things to say. When teachers or mentors ask them and listen genuinely, **it helps build self-esteem and confidence.** Also it demonstrates that you value a relationship with them and support their intelligence and burgeoning independence. The important thing to remember about drugs is that **it's not a five minute talk. It's a dialogue.** As kids grow, they will need more information relevant to their exposure. In general, smoking marijuana is harmful. The younger a kid is, the more it may be. Research shows that people who smoke it before age 15 **are 7 times more likely to use other drugs.** It also shows that people who didn't smoke marijuana by age 21 were more likely to never smoke it. For more information visit www.theantidrug.com, www.teachersguide.org, www.straightscoop.org, or call 800.788.2800.



Communication is connection. During their teenage years, kids are exposed to an ever widening variety of people and influences. You are one of the most important. Tell kids that you care about them. Praise them when they do well, no matter how small the accomplishment. Stay connected.

Getting to know kids and letting them know you is one of the most effective drug deterrents. Through their teenage years, this is not always easy. Even still, research shows that kids still want this to happen, even as they are exploring and growing into their own individuality. So take time every day to listen to them and build your relationship. This message is brought to you by the Office of National Drug Control Policy/Partnership for a Drug-Free America.

Space Out

Join the Apollo astronauts on the surface of the moon—virtually. You'll find stunning 360-degree panoramas at this companion site to the PBS special that chronicles the untold science and engineering story of how we got there. (QuickTime plug-in required.) On the Web at www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/tothemoon.

Spy Letters

If you think there's something novel about the Chinese government spying on the U.S., here's a University of Michigan site that should add some historical perspective: Spy Letters of the American Revolution. The actual letters are reproduced in digital form, along with transcriptions. On the Web at www.si.umich.edu/spies.

Building

What do windmills, one-room schoolhouses, and the Golden Gate Bridge have in common? They're part of an American Memory exhibit that documents achievements in architecture, engineering, and design in the USA. On the Web at memory.loc.gov.

Women's History Museum

On the 150th anniversary of the first American women's rights convention, the new National Museum of Women's History offers an online tour of the political

culture and imagery of American suffrage. On the Web at www.nmwh.org.

Building Math Skills

Figure This! Math Challenges for Families is a site designed to help students develop problem-solving math skills they need to succeed. Created specifically for middle-school students, the site was created in part by the Learning First Alliance, a group of 12 education organizations designed to improve public education, of which the NEA is a member. On the Web at www.figurethis.org.

Fun Learning

Fun school.com offers a large quantity of educational games and activities for teachers and students. Sponsored by the Family Education Network, this colorful site makes learning fun for children of all ages. On the Web at www.funschool.com.

Online Art

Experience a cyberspace holographic art exhibition with this Web site. The artist uses resources found in the rainforest to create a holographic light forest. The site also contains information about holograms and a glossary that defines key terms. On the Web at www.web.mit.edu/museum/lightforest/programs.html.

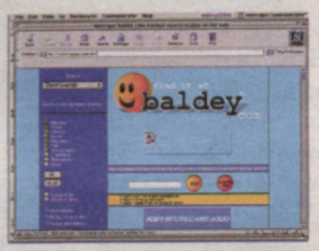
Aussie Lessons

With the 2000 Olympic Games quickly approaching, don't miss this opportunity to investigate the wonders of Australia. Two American world history high school teachers have designed four online lesson plans especially for secondary world history classes. The plans are also suggested for use in government, geography, environmental, or global issues classes. On the Web at www.austudies.org/k-12/curriculum.html.

Native American Culture

Bring your Native American culture lessons up to date with this online resource. Indianz.com features the latest news, entertainment guides, and Web links for Native Americans and those who are interested in learning more about them. You'll also find information about specific tribes and civil rights. On the Web at www.indianz.com.

A Quicker Cyber Search



If you're looking for information on the Internet, get the most out of your time with this Web site. With one click of a button you can use up to 10 search engines at once. On the Web at www.baldey.com.

Monica the Monarch

This Byram, New Jersey, eighth grader not only loves monarch butterflies, she raises them... and her Web site shows you how to join

the fun. Featured on *USA Today*'s Hot Web site list, this Web winner is used by over 50 schools nationwide and offers easy to understand directions for finding and raising a monarch butterfly, pictures included. Visitors of all ages can trace the life of a monarch from the caterpillar stage to its migration to Mexico where it dwells during the northern winter months. On the Web at www2.cybernex.net/~dbenz/monarch.htm.

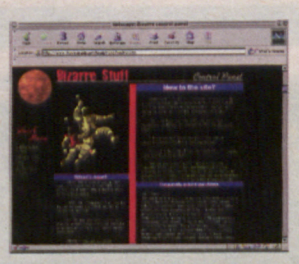
Meet the Gorillas

Two gorillas, Koko and Michael, can understand English and communicate with sign language. See them up-close, learn about the interspecies communication project and how to

protect and preserve gorillas in the wild on this Web site. On the Web at www.koko.org.

Wacky Science Experiments

Spice up your classroom science class with this museum of classical home science experiments that can be searched by category and



alphabetically online. Teach students how to make clouds in a bottle, the mystery behind dancing raisins, and much more. On the Web at freeweb.pdq.net/headstrong/control.htm.

Web Chess

Everything you wanted to know about chess in one

easy to use site. Play with chess masters from around the world, chat about the latest competition winners, and keep up to date with upcoming events. On the Web at www.kasparovchess.com.

OED Online

Touted as the most comprehensive informational source on the English language, the

Oxford English Dictionary Online accesses the full text of the 20-volume 2nd edition, as well as three volumes of additions. New entries are added quarterly, including modern slang and specialized terms. On the Web at www.oed.com.

DIVERSITY Calendar

January, 2001

Epiphany, January 6
Epiphany, also called the Twelfth Day, is celebrated 12 days after Christmas. Epiphany means "dawning of light" and commemorates the visit of the three wise men to the baby Jesus, who would later become Jesus Christ, the Christian's savior. Epiphany is generally noted in American Christian services, and is celebrated widely in Mexico and Latin-American countries.

Japanese New Year, December 29-January 3
Japanese New Year, also known as Shogatsu or Ganjitsu, is celebrated by many businesses in Japan from December 29 through January 3. At this time, many visit shrines to pray for good fortune and health to come, and Buddhist prayer bells ring out 108 times. The observance of Shogatsu is the most significant and elaborate event in Japan.

February — Black History Month

Race Relations Day, February 14
Race Relations Day is a U.S. Protestant holiday started in 1924 to encourage understanding among all races.

Abu Simbel Festival, February 22
Abu Simbel Festival in Egypt celebrates the two days of the year (the other being October 22) on which the light of the rising sun can reach the 180-foot-deep innermost chambers of Abu Simbel, the great temple of Ramses II.

Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week, February 20-27
Brotherhood/Sisterhood Week is sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews. The objective of this week is to promote justice, understanding, and cooperation among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews, as well as tolerance of all faiths.

March - National Women's History Month

Carnival, March 4
Carnival is an age-old festival celebrated in several countries including Brazil, Canada, and parts of the U.S., and Portugal. The entire period from Epiphany to Ash Wednesday for Christians is called Carnival and culminates in Mardi Gras. It features much merriment and self-indulgence; businesses often shut down and streets are filled with people celebrating.

International Working Women's Day, March 8
International Working Women's Day commemorates an 1857 revolt of American women in New York City protesting conditions in the textile and garment industries. In 1910, the International Conference of Women met in Helsinki, Finland, and established this date as an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution made by women.

in the Light Lane

Makes Sense to Me

Recently, I was teaching a sixth grade class in which the following conversation took place:

"Can anyone give an example of a preposition?"

"To?"

"That's right. Who can give another one?"

"For?"

"Very good! We've got the prepositions "to" and "for." How about one more example?"

"Six?"

"I'm sorry, but the number six is not a preposition."

"But it's an even number just like two and four!

Don Kendall
St. Augustine, Florida

One of my students came to me this morning and said, "Teacher, remember how I told you that my parents were arguing so much over the weekend? Well, I think everything is okay now because we had steak last night."

Diana Delaney
Fernandina Beach, Florida

Several times a month I tutor in an after-school reading and math computer program.

Recently, a third grader was having problems figuring out a reading comprehension question.

Knowing I was nearby, he said aloud: "I wish I could use my 50/50 lifeline right now."

Judy Rodecl
Andrews, North Carolina

During a social studies lesson, I was explaining to my class of fifth graders that President Washington rode a coach down the streets of New York City during his inaugural parade.

Nick, one of my students, looked at me rather puzzled and asked, "Well, if he's President, why didn't he ride first class?"

Denise Davis
Castaic, California

Our school was undergoing a year-long construction project.

During the day, the man in charge of the project would frequently be called to the office to answer questions or make decisions.

One day, I was walking in the corridor behind two fourth grade girls when I heard the familiar call over the PA system:

"Jay Smith, please report to the office."

One girl turned to her friend and said in a confiding tone, "He gets in trouble all the time!"

Suzanne Dawson Obuchowski
Topsfield, Massachusetts

In my sixth grade language arts class, students write in journals every day. One day in September their topic was about Labor Day.

One student wrote: "Labor Day is the day that you are most likely to have a baby or get pregnant. It's a day to celebrate."

Sarah Nowack
Decorah, Iowa

"In the future, please refrain from answering 'Duh' on the easier questions."

My fifth grade class was working on a page of various math skills as an assessment of prior knowledge.

One of the questions asked the students to draw an acute angle. As I walked around the various groups of students, I noticed many students were drawing pictures of pretty angels.

I asked one student what she was doing. She replied: "You wanted me to draw a cute angel, so I did!"

Jill Venable
Decatur, Indiana

Every fall our students wear tags pinned to their clothes, with their names and bus routes on them.

The students are taken to the buses by our fourth and fifth graders, who take their jobs very seriously.

But I did not realize how nervous they are about this responsibility until one of them ran into the office shouting: "Help! There is a kid out here without a price tag on!"

Denise Alexandria
Macomb, Michigan

After concluding a discussion on needs and wants with my first graders, they were asked to define needs and wants.

One boy spoke up and said, "My mom tells me what I need and I tell my mom what I want!"

Kathie Hutcheson
Martensdale, Iowa

In response to a journaling prompt, one sixth grade student wrote about a frightening experience while on a family vacation. Her younger brother was choking on a piece of candy while riding in the back seat of the car.

Her father had to pull off the road and perform the "Heimlich Remover," saving her brother and the vacation.

Karen Carland
Industry, Pennsylvania

I was talking with a seventh grade student of mine about his art project when another student approached us and asked, "What does behold mean?"

The student I had been talking with looked up and said, "You know, it's when they take the middle out of a doughnut."

Carole Raymond
Portland, Oregon

Following a discussion, I asked my second graders to write something they had just learned about Abraham Lincoln. Mixing his famous speech and his funeral train one child stated that "Lincoln rode the Gettysburg Express!"

Phyllis Boyajy
Livingston, New Jersey

Spotted Irish?

A group of third graders was brainstorming names of predatory animals. Lions and tigers were mentioned and then leopards.

One student looked rather confused.

"Andy," I asked, "do you know what leopards are?"

"Oh, sure," he said, "they come out around St. Patrick's Day."

Mary Milton
El Cerrito, California

After reading the "Rapunzel" story to my fifth grade ESL students, I asked: "What's the moral of the story?"

One of the girls quickly replied: "Not to have long hair."

Alina Jakubowska,
Kearny, New Jersey

I asked one of my first graders what was missing at the end of his sentence. He innocently told me, "A pyramid."

Lucy Hansen
Union City, California

I was teaching verb tenses to my second graders, explaining the past, present, and future tenses.

"The past is what has already happened, such as eating your breakfast and morning recess," I explained. "The present is right now; what's happening at this moment. The next tense is about what's going to happen. Does anyone know what we call what's going to happen next?"

"I know," said Dean. "Lunch!"

Tara Western
East Tawas, Mississippi

Got Laughs?

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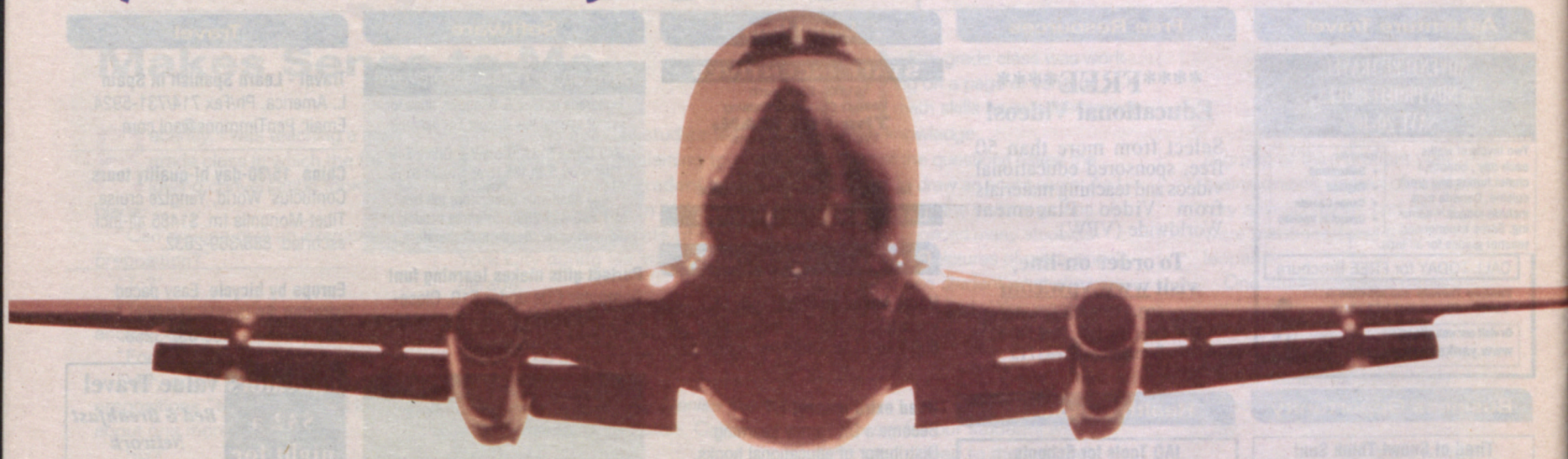

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